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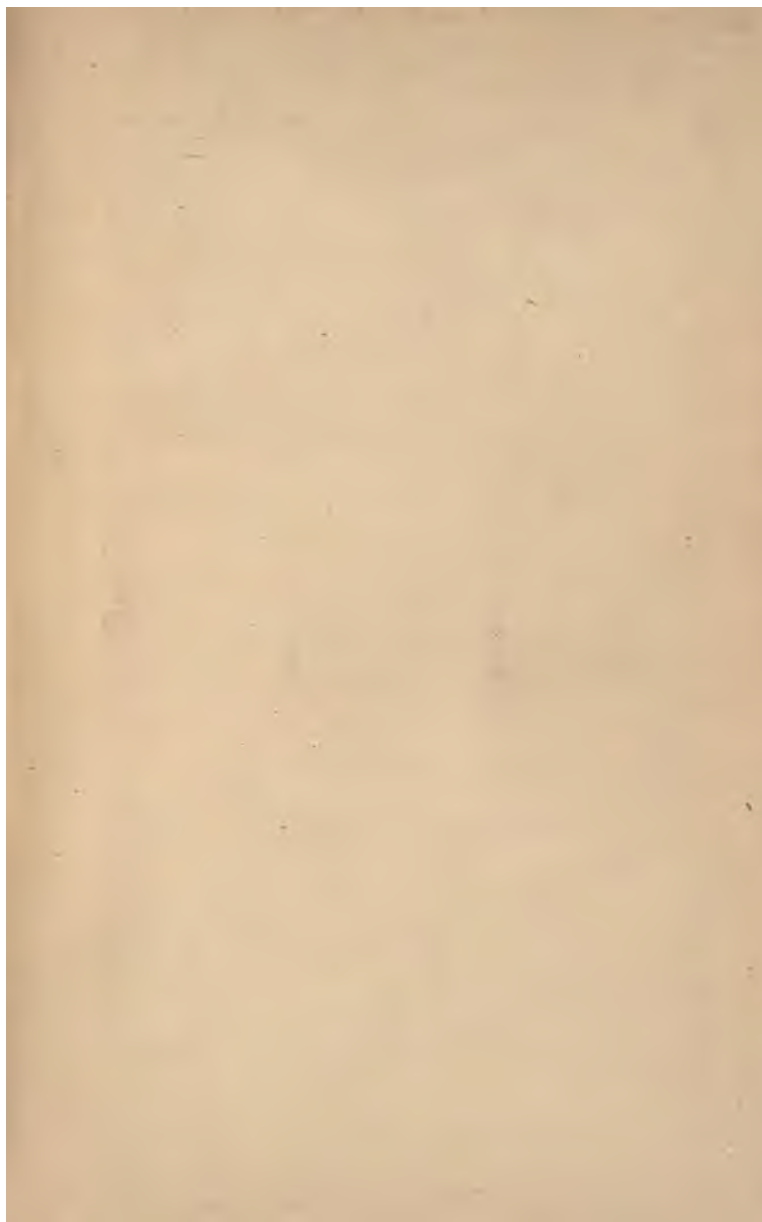
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1884.

IN THE CLEARINGS.

BY
Mrs. Kate Bennett
Mrs. **K. G. WELLS**.



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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

OUR denominational literature, so rich in most particulars, has been seriously deficient in books especially adapted for Sunday-school libraries; while it has been extremely difficult to find, outside the denomination, books of a distinctively religious character, unblemished by objectionable theological dogmas.

The Sunday-school Society, desirous of doing something towards remedying this defect, offered, in May, 1867, *three premiums*, of \$100, \$50, and \$25, respectively, "for the best three manuscripts of books calculated for Unitarian Sunday-school libraries, and adapted to children under ten years of age." Of course these were designed as a beginning only; the intent being to publish a few choice books each year, till a large and valuable list should be obtained.

In response to the offer, twenty-nine manuscripts were handed in, and carefully read by the committee. Of these, eight were selected as most suitable for the purpose in view, and as possessed of the highest degree of literary excellence, joined with a pure

moral and religious tone. Five have been already published, and have met with the warm approval of those for whose benefit they were specially designed. Their titles are,—

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
42, Chauncy Street.


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CHAPTER I.

THE DEPARTURE.

“ NEVER can get ready in time. I do think, Will, it is the most dreadful plan that I ever heard of. It is no fun to go down to Maine and be buried alive, whether I want to be or not; and when there are so many parties.”

“Jennie!” Was it the sadness or the tinge of sternness in the voice, that sent the color up Jennie’s cheeks, and made her bend more closely over her packing! Yet after a few minutes she threw back her head, and turning almost defiantly to Will, exclaimed again, “Well, it is no fun; and I can’t help liking fun: it was born in me, and you can’t make me good right off. Down in Maine I shall have to do every thing, and” —

“You will be head of the house,” mischievously interposed her brother Frank.

“Not where you are concerned,” retorted his sister. “I don’t know how I can ever endure it. It is worse for me than for any of you, because — because it is;” and she half glanced at her brother, who had not moved since she first spoke. Again the quick blood colored her face, giving promise of a more generous heart than her words would seem to warrant; while she, unconsciously, took one article after another out of her trunk, which a few minutes before had been carefully placed there. Still she did not speak. The clock ticked loudly, her conscience yet louder, as she thought of the scenes of the few past days: how sure she had been that she should never do wrong again, — of the promise made to her mother; of her vow to herself, and her prayer to God. It grew too much for her: she was vexed that she wanted to cry, vexed that she was ashamed of herself, vexed that Will had seen her fail so soon, — Will, for whose approbation she cared more than for any thing else, — and vexed that she had grieved him.

Who would speak first? It was Will, who, taking a bundle from her hands, held them in his own, forcing her by the intentness of his gaze to look up. "Jennie dear, I am so sorry for you." Still she did not speak.

"Jennie, don't make it any harder for me. I cannot bear the burden unless you help me. I hope your trial will end sooner than you now think: it shall, if I can make it. I will work night and day."

"Will! Will, don't say another word. I don't want you to. You will get all tired out, and then you'll die just as everybody else does. I'll do the work. You are all worn out now. I am so sorry I talked so. Try to forget it, please. I don't know what is the matter with me, but at Aunt Clara's I cared only for a good time; and then when I came home, mother set me to thinking, and I had not got things straight in my mind when she — And now to-day, it is all topsyturvy again, just as I thought I should never forget how I felt this last week. It seemed

then as if God or heaven were right inside me. But, Will, I do love you, and am so proud of you. There now! let me go on packing;" and playfully kissing his hands, she withdrew hers, but only to catch up her little sister, who came bounding into the room, shouting, "Maud did come, and Maud's kitty too," the adverb spoken with an odd mixture of defiance and self-congratulation.

"Maud shall take her kitty way off ever so far, in the steam cars, way down to Maine," said Will.

"Me packed up all Maud's dollie's clothes. Sister Jennie put them in the trunk for Maud. Who'll take care of Maud, mamma gone?"

"Will and Jennie will take care of Maud," replied her brother. "But where has mamma gone?"

"Mamma gone to see heavenly Father; heavenly Father take" — and she shook her head, as if puzzled by her grammar; and then cunningly tossing it back, in a manner peculiar to her whenever she had mastered a difficulty, said, "heavenly Father take care

of mamma now, take care of Will too, and Jennie and Maud and kitty." The last word was uttered in a little quivering tone, which her brother hastened to calm, by his assertion that her heavenly Father would also take care of kitty; "but," added he, "Maud must ask him herself to take care of kitty."

"Me ask him now." And without a change of posture, though with an upward look, the child talked — as she termed it — to God; as older persons phrase it, she prayed.

The striking of the clock grated painfully on the ears of the little family, who dreaded to leave their home, and yet knew that trunks were to be strapped, windows fastened, the kitchen fire put out, and every thing ready for the express-man. Busily they all worked, Jennie as well as the rest; for no one could excel her in swiftness and care when she chose to be useful. When all was done, they slowly wandered through the various rooms, and, as if by common consent, found themselves at last in their mother's chamber. Poor little Frank struggled hard to prove that he

was a big boy, though he longed to cry in good earnest. At last he seized upon Maud, and began to scold her for being so quiet when she was going off on a journey.

"Me can't take mamma," was the little one's answer: "me want mamma more than Jennie."

"Don't, Maudie! my heart will break, if you say so," said Jennie.

"Me want mamma," was her only reply.

"Frankie, take her away, can't you?" begged Jennie.

"She won't come unless you all do," said Frank; "and," continued he, "I don't believe that mother would want us to do so, and — and I know she'll have a good time now. Come along, Maud."

"Will," whispered Jennie as she knelt down by her brother.

"I know, dear," was all his reply.

"Come, Jennie, Will! here is the carriage," called Frank. They soon reached the depot; and while they are travelling down to Maine, I must tell you why they are going there.

Will, who apparently has the direction of the journey, was the eldest child of Mr. and Mrs. Daim. In his early days, his home had been one of comfort and luxury. He went to college with the expectation of becoming a professional man, a doctor he secretly hoped; for broken bones had always been curiosities to him, though obliged to confess that once he had fainted at the sight of blood.

Every hour that could be snatched from his regular college studies was passed at the Hospital, where he became a great favorite with the physicians, who took him round with them in their visits to the different wards.

The boy's hopes were big, when in the middle of his senior year he was called home by the sudden illness of his father. It was a common story. Large speculations, though undertaken in full prospect of success, had brought failure; and disappointment had brought paralysis. A week, and the struggle was over; and a broken-hearted family, gathered in the father's library, talked of

future plans. Will alone was able to aid his mother with counsel. Jennie, the eldest girl, — bright, impulsive, and wayward, — was but sixteen. Frank — an affectionate, trusting little fellow — numbered eight years; and Maud was hardly three. What was to be done! what could be done! Will finally decided to finish the few months of student life still left to him, and then begin at once to earn his daily bread, giving up all thoughts of a profession. It was a sufficient reason that he had no means of his own upon which to depend, even if he should study for three years longer; and a more than sufficient incentive to his manly heart was the thought that he could thus aid his mother. After the settlement of her husband's affairs, nothing would be left for the widow's support except some land in Maine, and just enough ready money to meet the current expenses of the next few months, with no balance left for Class Day. The shabby old hat that Will threw into the air as he joined his class in singing "Auld Lang Syne" round the old tree, was his only hat. Little cared ne.

His thoughts were full of his noble purpose. That old hat, — why, it was to be his only one for years to come, for aught he could see. Never mind, his mother should have a new bonnet.

So down to Maine he went, on to his father's land, where he occupied an old log cabin, built originally for a logging camp. It was two or three miles from the nearest settlement several clearings intervening. There he worked with might and main, getting out lumber in the winter and farming in the summer. Every now and then he thought of his doctor's life that was to have been, and would look up into the clear blue sky and wonder if he could ever be a doctor in the next world; at least, he would know there what he had craved to study here.

The mother, meanwhile, took other little children into her home, and gave them all the care she bestowed upon her own. Jennie spent much of her time at her Aunt Clara's, in a distant town, where she was petted and spoiled by those who should have taught her

that poverty nobly borne becomes an easy burden.

At the time, however, when our story begins, these little boarders had been sent back to their own parents, and Jennie and Will called home; for the dear mother's health was failing. She had endured in silence and in trust until the cord of life was snapped asunder; and she lay down in her bed, never to rise again.

She and Will had decided before her death that all the little household goods should be sold, except such as would be needed in their forest home; and that Will should take the children with him to his log cabin, where, at least, they could be together, and would not be dependent on strangers.

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CHAPTER II.

THE LOG CABIN.



THE travellers reached their destination late in the afternoon. They had been all day long in the cars; and though peanuts, lozenges, and delicious Berwick sponge-cake had beguiled the way, their limbs were cramped and their heads ached with the constant din of motion. Little Maud had taken many a nap in her sister's arms, while Frank had been too much interested in all that he saw, to even think of sleeping. Here they were at last, somehow or other, all turned out upon the platform of a little wooden depot or shed, with the train rattling past them. It did look forlorn. It was growing dark, not a house to be seen, only two or three old men lounging on an uncomfortable bench, smoking dirty pipes,

and looking more neglected and forlorn, if possible, than the pipes or the depot.

"Holloa, Will!" called out one of them. "Be you come at last? Been expecting a long time: train late to-night. So the old woman died at last. Well, the genteel, purty kind of women takes death easy. They all on a sudden lie down, and don't get up again; only their fingers gets kind o' thin and white, and their eyes make one feared. I've seen 'em, lots of 'em; not that my old woman was one of 'em. She took death hard, jes' as she did work. Well, here's the wagon at 'tother door. When I gets on my old woman, it kinder riles me like. Who'll give a lift. City trunks, eh? none of your wooden chests and sickly locks."

"Come, Will, — do come: how can you listen to him? Think of his calling mother an 'old woman'!" urged Jennie, in a low tone.

"Dan, give a lift to my things, won't you? I'll put the children into the wagon myself. We must make haste home. Is Martha there?" said Will.

"Law bless you!" replied Dan. "Martha has been a scourin' and a slickin' up all day long. I guess that gal of yours won't like the looks of things, nor like my gal either," added he, in a low tone, seeing the scowl on Jennie's face, who really was exercising all her self-control.

"Never mind, Dan," interposed Will: "you see my sister has not been used to this way of life, and it is all strange to her, so you must not mind what she says. I shall depend upon you for advice, now I have such a large family. Here's Frank: he'll do your bidding, and so will Maud;" whose earnest gaze was fixed upon Dan.

"Ah, young chap! you allers do what you likes with me: it is a blessed day ever you came amongst us. And, jes' to oblige, I won't say a word about that oldest gal thar," answered Dan. "Beg your pardon, Miss," continued he, scraping an awkward bow to Jennie. "Well now, you beat Martha all hollow! if you ain't handsom', you are the purtest gal anywhere round in these ere clear-

ings. What will Martha say? Sunthin'." This last word was uttered in a low, mysterious voice; for Martha considered herself the belle of the district, and was very proud of her ability and of her really pleasant face.

Jennie could not help being amused at the old man, his admiration of her was so evident; and Will hoped that this little tribute to her vanity would enable her to regard him with kindlier feelings. She clambered up into the old lumbering wagon, followed by the others, and away they rode, slowly and with difficulty; for it was early summer-time, and the roads were either muddy or clogged with the trunks and branches of dead trees. The scenery was very beautiful, with forests of tall pine on either side, through which, every now and then, glimpses could be caught of the high mountains, and lines of undulating hills.

A few miles brought them to their journey's end. In a large, open clearing stood a log cabin, with all the modern advantages of such a dwelling. Woodbine grew luxuriantly over

the outside; and the door was a perfect bower of green vines, which sent their branches round the window-frames. Jennie, in spite of her city notions, could not help exclaiming, "Oh, how lovely!"

With eager bounds they jumped down from their rickety seats, and were met by a tall, broad-shouldered girl, with great black eyes, and her hair in a net down on her neck, in the same manner in which Jennie had worn hers six years ago. "Isn't she horrid, Frank!" asked Jennie aloud.

"Horrid, what's horrid? I never saw any thing so pretty," answered he. "Why, Will, what a chimney! it is big enough to roast an ox."

"Here, wait a minute, Frank!" called his brother. "Let us have the fun of going together over the cabin, if there is any fun in it. This is Martha, who is going to help us, — Old Ben's daughter, — and this is my sister Jennie."

Martha never moved. She had not taken her eyes off Jennie, who seemed to her a vis-

ion of the rarest loveliness and latest Parisian style; for young girls who like dress know about Paris, no matter where they live. Meanwhile to poor Jennie a whole year of agony was condensed into that moment; but her brother's face of mute appeal helped her better nature to conquer, and she held out her hand to Martha with as much sweetness and frankness as she would have done to one of her schoolmates, though she had to explore the folds of Martha's dress to find her hand; for the poor backwoods girl was utterly bewildered. "Be *you* come to live *here*? Well now, who'd ha' thought it. Will you make my gown fit like yourn?" Such was her honest greeting.

"Yes, any thing," said Jennie, laughing, "if you will only give me some supper: little Maud is so hungry and tired."

"As much as you want; plenty of milk and eggs and butter. Will has tea in his cabin. This is the sprucest cabin for many a mile 'round. We all thought he was stuck up and proud when he fust came; but he

isn't one bit, and has done us all many a good turn," replied Martha.

It was indeed a good supper that she gave them, far more than the children could eat, — ham and eggs, wheat bread, salmon, and tea sweetened with maple sugar, served in what seemed to be both kitchen and parlor; for Will insisted on their eating before they began their explorations, while Old Ben occupied the time in unloading his team with Martha.

"Now, Jennie dear, do you think you and Maud can sleep in my cot-bed until we can make some better arrangement? You must give me some good hints, and to-morrow we'll see what we can do; but if you can sleep in my room, and let Martha lie on the floor in there with you, to-night, it will be better than not sleeping at all."

"Oh, yes!" said Jennie, "that'll do; and Maud shall go right to bed."

The child would not go, however, until on Will's knee she had been told how she had come way down to Maine in steam cars. No other story suited her as well.

"And can't Maud thank her heavenly Father for taking care of her in the steam cars?"

"Maud can't see him: where is he?"

"By and by you will know. But he can hear you, though you can't see him." The child looked puzzled. "Can't I hear you, Maud, when you are in one room and I in another? heavenly Father hears Maud just as brother Will does. So Maud must thank him."

Maud looked right into her brother's eyes, and said, "Maud does thank heavenly Father, and loves him too." Her brother then put her gently down on the floor, bidding her go to Jennie, who was waiting to put her to bed; and the little darling was soon wrapped in pleasant dreams of her day's travelling.

"And where am I to sleep, Will? I don't see any bed for me," asked Frank.

"I wish I had a bed for you," answered his brother, sorrowfully; "but don't you think that to-night you could sleep on this couch of cedar-boughs with me, just for the

fun of it?" added he, in a more cheerful tone. "The room isn't much bigger than a large closet: in fact, it has been my store-closet; but I wrote to Martha to carry all the things into the barn, because you and I would want it. We can tell stories to each other all night."

"That will be jolly," declared Frank. "Don't you remember, Jennie, when we would ask each other for forgiveness for all that we had done wrong, or meant to do next day?"

"Do go to bed, Frank," said Jennie, peevishly; for her ill-temper was coming back. Will took his sister's hand in his, and drew her out into the moonlight, saying, —

"Jennie dear, I have ever so much to tell you, and my heart is so full that I must speak to-night. Do you think you can make up your mind to live with me here? At most, it cannot be for more than two years; for, by that time, I hope to have made enough to move into some pretty village, where there will be a school for Frank and society for you. When I first came, you cannot imagine

the loneliness of the place. This cabin was a large, wretched hovel, with but one room in it. I made the two partitions, as you see; got a cot-bed, a chest of drawers, tables, chairs, and an arm-chair, Jennie. Fortunately, the cabin had been a dwelling for some twenty or thirty loggers; so that I really have a good deal of room. I don't know what you would say if you should see one of the poorer huts, with the pork-barrel and wash-pail in the kitchen, which is also sitting-room and chamber. But all I can say will be little recommendation, I fear. Just try it for one year, and if— I'll make you a promise, if you will make me one. Just twelve months from to-day, if you tell me that you have thoroughly tried to like this place, and yet are unhappy in it, I promise you, you shall not stay; somehow or other you shall have another home. But will you first try hard? You know no one can be smarter than you. Mother told me, when she was dying, that she was sure you would be my greatest blessing."

"I do want to do what is right: I think the cabin is about as bad as it can be; but if it can be made any better, it shall be. You know I can't bear to have any one else do better than I. Mother used to give me all the care of Maud, sick or well; and I love her dearly. Of course, I can cook and keep house,—*cabin*, I mean," said she, merrily,— "but, if you talk 'goody' to me, I can't and won't stand it. One reason why I wanted to come here was because there was no church to go to. I hate family prayers, and daily blessings, and big family Bibles, and all such things. When I feel like it, I read the Bible; and it is pretty often, too. I'll make a promise in my turn. You may direct me and scold me as much as you please, and I'll bear it patiently, if you won't try to make me a saint. Promise, come now! that's a good brother."

"No, Jennie: I can't promise; but I will try to vex you as little as I can. Will you trust me?"

"I knew you wouldn't promise. I like

you better for it, though, " added she, frankly. " About Martha, — must she sleep with me ? "

" I am afraid so, for the present ; for you must have some one to aid you. I have an idea, which, if I can make it work, will be capital. That is, to have Old Ben move up here and take one of these sheds, the largest one, and fit it up into a cabin for himself and Martha. It will be just as good as living in the house, in regard to the work ; for she can come as early and stay as late as you please. There's the shed, not ten feet off, you see."

" That will be splendid. You are first-rate, Will, after all, — and handsome, too. I wonder if I should like you as much if you were ugly ? "

" Do you know that you were pleased with Martha's admiration of you ? " said her brother.

" Why, of course I was. I can't help knowing that I am rather pretty ; but, honestly, I think no more about it than I do about my being well and strong ; except, perhaps, that I

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want people to love me ; and I know that at first sight it is easier for me to like handsome boys than plain ones ; though after I know them, it makes no difference. I wish everybody was pretty ; and everybody has a something in their face which makes it pretty."

"Everybody who is good-tempered, you mean," added Will.

CHAPTER III.

THE LOG CABIN, CONTINUED.



EVERY one was stirring early the next morning, for every one had a confused sense that there was a great deal to do. The children could scarcely wait till breakfast was over, so eager were they to see the cows and hens which had already made themselves known by their cackling and lowing. Frank was greatly surprised at the care that Will bade him exercise in the amount of Indian meal given to the hens; for wheat was the chief product of the part of Maine where they lived, the climate scarcely permitting a scanty supply of corn for the hens. Will milked the cows, and left Frank in charge of Maud around the sheds, two of which resembled the cabin in their outside appearance, minus the chimney, while

he went back to assist Jennie, who already was proud of being mistress, and never did mistress have a more obedient servant than Martha, who spent all the spare minutes in admiring her young lady. They unpacked boxes and trunks and bundles; out came crockery and glassware, kitchen utensils, linen, tea, sugar, spices, clothes and their mother's chamber furniture — a simple painted set, worn with age and use, but wonderful and luxurious in Martha's eyes and in contrast with the rough log cabin.

"This last is to be yours, Jennie," said Will. "We can make my old room quite habitable with it. Won't the looking glass look oddly down here? and somewhere there are some bits of carpet, which we will spread over the rushes in winter, so that it will be as soft under your feet as a Wilton carpet."

"I am so glad," replied Jennie, "that we brought all the old curtains; if I only had a closet or wardrobe even, for my clothes."

"I wish you had, dear; perhaps I can contrive something, and I must make some kind

of pine book-case for you, with the natural knots of the wood for ornaments. Your room must be also a parlor for us. You are a brave good girl to be so cheerful. One or two years will quickly pass away."

"Why, the house won't be in order by that time. O, dear! there is so much to do, it makes me tired to think of it. Chintz coverings for the trunks, and barrel ottomans — you can make them, can't you, cut the barrel off, low down?"

"Yes;" answered Will, "if you can show me more exactly than you can tell me. But what are we going to do about dinner? Cook in the midst of clothes and chests?"

"O, a picked-up dinner is first rate. There was enough left from supper to last a week," replied she gaily.

"I don't believe Maud and Frank will think so. See, here they come, hot and tired-looking. Why what is the matter, Maud?" asked Will, seeing tears in the child's eyes.

"Where my kitty, where Maud's kitty?"

Maud tell kitty not go way; where kitty gone?" sobbed the little one.

"Come and hunt for her," called Jennie. "I guess you can find her."

"Kitty, where kitty?" still cried the child, at the same time turning every thing topsy-turvy till she found her on top of some dresses way off in a corner. "Maud found kitty; kitty want milk; I tell you kitty, no go there," she said, in a tone of command, as the poor cat turned itself round for another nap. "Kitty want milk, kitty's head ache cause of steam-cars. Heavenly Father take care of kitty and cows?" asked the child half in doubt, again.

"Yes dear, heavenly Father takes care of kitty and cows and every thing," replied her brother.

"Maud see big cow, little cow," continued the child. "By and by little cow get big cow. Heavenly Father take care of cow, and help little cow get big cow. Where heavenly Father?"

"When Maud is a big girl, Will will tell

her where He is." The child scarcely waited for his answer before she was off on a chase with her kitty, who spied either a mouse or a rat.

"Where is Martha, why can't she come and help us?" inquired Jennie.

"She is in one of the sheds churning the cream for the butter," said her brother. "Come, we have worked hard enough for one morning, let us take a walk round the farm."

Will had rendered his father's land more profitable than was ever thought possible. Busy all summer, as a farmer, and in winter as a logger, he could look forward confidently to the time when he would be able to manage his business through the agency of others. Fortunately for him his land was far richer than the average, so that Dame Nature never allowed him an idle moment, through lack of material to work upon. He raised potatoes, oats, grass, some corn, and a few of the hardy vegetables, such as beets, carrots, turnips; "long sass" and "short sass," as the people called them, according to the length or rotun-

dity of the plant. He kept hens, oxen, sheep, and cows, and Martha and old Ben were his assistants. He had hitherto always lived alone in his cabin, Martha coming up two miles from her home to keep the house in order, and bake up batches of bread and pies for him, the rest of his simple fare being cooked by himself. He and Jennie now concluded, that one of these sheds could be rendered very cosy, if old Ben would come and live in it, for it would be impossible for Jennie to do all the work, and Martha must be, if not in the house, yet within call from the windows. How to persuade Ben, that was the trouble. "You must make him like you, and then he will do any thing for you," advised Will.

Ben was one of those characters who admire smartness in others, but are too lazy to cultivate it in themselves. He had married a stalwart woman, who tormented him day and night on account of his inefficiency, and who was always dragging the future into the present. Ben bore it all with provoking good humor, though he had been heard to say,

when gossiping Sunday evenings with the men in the settlement, "My old woman is allers a borrying trouble; I don't borry no trouble; she's allers a jawing me cause I won't borry no trouble." Martha was his idol, fully returning his affection. Vanity was her only fault, which her father helped to foster, by gifts of extraordinary dresses, which Martha wore, with a dim sense that, though she was "real pretty," her attire might be prettier. No wonder then that she hailed with delight Jennie's coming.

Their walk carried them a long distance from home. Little Maud was mounted on her brother's shoulder before they had thought of turning back; and when they did, it was with such appetites, that Jennie wished she had ordered dinner. Martha, however, had not forgotten this opportunity of displaying her skill, for a table awaited them, "set all in a heap," as Frank declared, but loaded with new potatoes, bread and butter, and stewed cranberries, which Will told them would appear morning, noon, and night,

three hundred and sixty-five days in the year.

The twilight crept into far pleasanter rooms than those upon which the morning sun had shone. Martha thought that there was nothing like city folks for fixin' up and making tidy. Will's room could hardly have been recognized in the pretty rustic apartment, bearing evident signs of womanly taste, for Jennie was constantly devising new expedients to hide deficiencies. The kitchen could not be transformed into any thing else. The chimney-place would not be made smaller; to be sure, it was filled with branches of evergreen, Frank's afternoon work, so that it looked like some broad shrub; but the hearth still remained, and seemed to occupy the whole floor. The hearth-brush was made of dried twigs, and a long pole extended across the fireplace, where Martha hung her dish-towels.

"Will, you must make a towel-stand to-morrow, the first thing," said Jennie.

"I should like to know," said Will, "how

many first things I have to do. That is only one of twenty *firsts*." The cups and saucers, and various kinds of dishes were visibly arranged on shelves, suggesting another first thing to be done immediately, namely, doors, so as to make a cupboard of the shelves.

Bed-time came at last for the little ones, though they asserted that they were not at all sleepy, and felt as if they had always lived there.

"Jennie," whispered Maud, as her sister was putting her to bed, "Maud did be happy. Heavenly Father take care of Maud all day, and Maud thank Him ever and ever so much. Jennie thank Him too." Jennie knelt down by the little one, and thanked Him fervently for making it so much pleasanter for her than she had imagined possible; and with her thanks, came holy thoughts of her mother, and of the duties that she must now fulfil to her brothers and sister.

Little Maud looked wonderingly at her kneeling sister, thinking, "Maud no thank

heavenly Father so; Maud get up and kneel down like Jennie;" but sleep overpowered her, and long before her sister had risen, she was dreaming of her kitty.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RAT-TRAP.



HE next morning was damp and rainy. All seemed to be glad that there was no chance for out-door enjoyment, for it was very hard to clean house, as Frank called it, when every thing abroad was so lovely and bright. Will was eager to invent some effectual means of extirpating the rats, who especially infested Ben's future home. Traps of various kinds had proved useless, and he was now determined to venture upon an original idea of his own. Taking Frank with him, whose delight was intense at the prospect of a rat hunt, they went over to the shed or cabin.

"Why, Will, what do you want of that barrel," said Frank, mystified at his brother's proceedings.

"I knew you would begin by asking questions," replied Will. "Now suppose you put on your best Sunday-go-to-meeting guessing-cap, and see if you can't tell."

"How funny, Will. I have not any Sunday guessing-cap. Besides, is it right to guess even conundrums on Sunday? Bible ones are not wrong, are they?"

"I would sooner guess any other kind of conundrum on Sunday or any week day rather than a Bible one, because whenever I read a passage in the Bible which has been a cause of amusement to me, it is very hard for me to think of it again, soberly."

"If you are going to make that trap, I wish you would hurry," said Frank.

Will turned to hide a smile, at the same time raising the barrel into an upright position. He then poured a large bucket of water, which he had brought with him, to Frank's amazement, into the barrel, and placed a brick endwise in the bottom of the barrel. Finally he took a sheepskin, and, cutting a hole in the middle, fastened it over the

top, and on this sheepskin scattered crumbs of bread.

"Now it is finished, let us go home," said Will.

"I don't see any thing," cried Frank.

"Wait till to-morrow morning, and then you shall see; the rats will come after the bread crumbs, never thinking of the hole, and — come, come, we must go and help Jennie now."

Poor Frank was sorely puzzled, but as he had an idea of his own, which he was endeavoring to render practicable before announcing it, he ran quickly home. After an hour's time, he stated that he wished to paper the walls with birch bark, and that Jennie should then execute various designs in colors upon its surface.

"You have loads of bark, Will, all rolled up, out in the barn; and I can unroll them and wet them and press them, and then tack the bark on to these logs. Do please, please let me. I can begin in our room first and do only one side of it, and then

if you don't all like it, I — I — won't do any more."

The boy's face had been brilliant with expectation, until, seeing the hesitating expression of Will's countenance, his hopes began to fail. His brother hastened to assure him, however, that he certainly might try, and if he did succeed, it would be a very great improvement. Jennie doubted whether she could find time from her housekeeping for the fine arts, and suggested that Frank and Maud could embellish the paper with newspaper pictures at least; and as they would be cheap, they could easily be renewed.

Frank began his preparations at once. He passed all day in the barn, unrolling, moistening, and placing the bark under the packing boxes, which were made on purpose, he thought. The next morning his desire to test the success of the rat-trap was greater than his impatience to become a paper-hanger. He ran to the shed, and came back, exclaiming, —

"O, Will! you have caught twelve rats.

How did you do it? What was the use of the brick."

"If you had gone out there," answered Will, "about ten o'clock last night, you would understand. The first rat, I suppose, found out the bread and jumped up on the sheepskin and down he went, through the hole into the water; not liking death by drowning he climbed up on the brick where there was just room for him to stand. Then rat, number two, mounted up on the sheepskin and fell below. He also, disliking too much water, tried to throw rat number one off the brick, so that he should have it all to himself; but rat-like, they fought so hard that ten other rats heard and came, one after another going through the same performance, until each fought himself dead or was drowned."

"How do you know they actually did so?" asked Frank.

"I don't know, but that is what I intended they should do, and I rather think it was what they did."

"If I can hang my birch-bark paper as

nicely as you made your trap, it will be first-rate" sighed Frank.

"Don't you want to come down to the settlement with me, and buy the nails for your business?" asked Will. "Maud can go with us and Jennie also; she worked hard enough yesterday to have a vacation to-day."

This settlement was one of the most flourishing in the northern part of Maine. Its inhabitants already looked forward to a future equality if not rivalry with Bangor. It consisted of about twenty houses, scattered along the distance of a mile, a sawmill and a store. The houses were very comfortable, and clap-boarded, and painted white. The sawmill was owned by the richest man of the place, who lived in a two-story house and had eight panes of glass in his windows, while his poorer neighbors had looked out of twelve. Moreover he had a real parlor, used for nothing but company, while no one else could boast of any thing beyond a sitting-room, which held a rough couch where one or two children could sleep, and a stove where

the dinner could be and often was cooked. The great man's parlor also contained numerous family portraits, which by their mutual resemblance strongly supported the theory of the unity of the race. Blue and white Parian vases, shells, an "in memoriam" hair work, a kneeling Samuel and a plaster-of-paris meeting house with windows, lit up by a candle behind them, constituted the rest of the adornments.

The store was kept alternately by an old woman, an old man, and a little girl. In one corner was a box of tame snakes which often gambolled on the floor, fed from the hand of their mistress, and were generally well-behaved. The little girl in berry season struck across the country, on to the stage route, where when the daily coach passed by, she would offer her berries for sale, and sing, —

"When Adam was created
In Eden's happy shade,
For him was no companion
Nor any helpmeet made.

When to his contemplation
His beauteous bride was shown,

He found to admiration
That he had lost a bone.

Now the woman was not taken
From out of Adam's head,
So she should not be ruler
But in all things be led.

But the woman she was taken
From under Adam's arm,
So she should be protected
From injury and harm."

Buck-shot, percussion-caps, fishing-lines and hooks, in short all the necessary equipments for gunning or fishing, could be found in this wonderful store; which also contained a small thread and needle department; tin dogs, cats, and horses, for the children; a miniature grocery establishment, a calico and cotton shelf, and a provision trough, holding very salt hams and very tough corned beef, which Will hailed with delight as first cousin to fresh roasting beef. It took far more time to examine this medley of well known, but oddly consorted articles, than to purchase the nails. Every one knew Will, and had a pleasant word for Frank and Maud,

and a stare of delighted astonishment for Jennie.

It was a hot walk home, though much of the way led through the woods. As Will was holding aside the low branch of a tree, to give the others room to pass, he suddenly whispered, "Look! see, Maud, see!" There was a mother partridge, running across the path, followed by all her little ones; she was very much frightened, the instinct for her own self-preservation struggling with her maternal love, as they could tell by the fluttering of her feathers, and by her now eyeing them and now the surrounding landscape, then half spreading her wings as if she had made up her mind to fly, and again, with a little, low, melancholy sound, looking down upon her brood and hurrying them on faster than their legs could carry them. Motherly care prevailed, and soon they were lost among the bushes. Maud was inconsolable. "Biddy gone," said she.

"Yes, mother biddy took good care of her

chickens, and is going to put them to bed," said Frank.

"No, no! heavenly Father take care of itty chickies, and ma-ma biddy put them to bed," replied Maud.

They met with no other adventure on their way home, for they already had become too accustomed to meeting the harmless striped snake to consider it to-day, as a striking event. "O Will!" said Jennie, "do you remember when we were little children, how cruel you were to me?"

"No, I am sure I don't," answered he.

"Oh, yes, you were. Mother said it was wanton mischief, — those were her very words, for I always remembered them because they had such a big sound, and because I was so glad to have you get into a scrape, instead of always having fault found with me. I remember just the dress I wore, low necked, short sleeved; I hated snakes and was terribly afraid of them, so you thought you would teach me a lesson. You found a little black snake, and ran after me, pretending you had a

secret to tell me, and put the horrid thing right on my bare neck."

"O Will! you didn't, did you?" cried Frank.

"I am afraid I did, if Jennie says so. I was not always as kind to her, as you are to Maud. I have had to repent of many of my boyish bravado deeds, but it was a great deal harder for me to be good than it is for you."

"Why, what do you mean by that? It seems so easy to be good."

"I hope it always will seem so. But I had a selfish, quick disposition to contend with, and could not endure the slightest reproof."

"Why, what has made you so good then?"

"It is a long story, but if you care to hear it, suppose we sit down here. Maud is fast asleep in my arms, and I can lay her down on these dried leaves without awaking her. Jennie already knows about it, for mother told her."

"I could not have been more than fourteen when it happened. If the other boys would

not do just what I wanted, I would strike them. Of course, they grew to dislike me, so that it was very hard for me to find companions to play with. There was one boy who stood by me. He always took my part, and said I was not half so bad as I seemed. He was younger and smaller than I, and sickly, so that reading was his great delight. I never was angry with him, and when he saw my hand raised in temper, he would catch hold of me and beg me to stop, and tell me that God was so grieved when I was angry. I am afraid I did not care much for God, but whenever I saw his sick, tearful face looking up into mine, I could not bear to grieve him, so I would check my anger, outwardly, at least. One day, he felt very miserably, and wanted me to stay and play marbles with him. I told him there was no fun in playing with him, and that I wanted to go with the other boys. I recollect just as well as if it were yesterday, how he looked; he never spoke, but great tears gathered in his eyes and staid there; he was too

manly to let them fall, but I did not think so then, and called him a cry-baby, and threw a pointed stick at him, half in fun and half in anger, that he had asked me to stay, and that I did not want to stay.

“‘ O Will! you have put my eye out.’

“That was all he said. I fell at his feet, and cried and begged him to look up, for he had buried his head in his hands.

“‘ No, I can’t,’ he said; ‘ it hurts me to look up, though I can’t see.’

“I had really done what he said, just because I was angry. His mother came in and I told her about it. She was a poor, hard-working woman, and this was her only child, for whom she toiled day and night to procure him the delicacies which his weak frame required. She never uttered one word of blame, but sent me quickly for the doctor. He came and said that Charlie would never see again from the eye which I had struck, and that he was afraid that the other one, from sympathy with the wounded one, would be too weak for him to use it.

“‘Then I can never read again, doctor,’ said Charlie.

“‘I am afraid not, my poor boy,’ he answered, ‘because you are not likely to ever be very strong in health; but I will do the best I can for you.’

“Charlie turned his swollen bloodshot eyes to me, saying, ‘Never mind, Willie, you can read to me; don’t feel bad, you didn’t mean to.’

“I was broken-hearted. I did not *mean* to, but I was angry and had done it. All that night I lay awake in agony. Mother had always taught me to say my prayers, but I don’t think I had ever really prayed. It was toward morning. I had tossed about until I was feverish; Charlie’s eyes were constantly before me; I realized more and more vividly what I had done; at last in pure despair, I jumped out of bed and called upon God and told him he must cure Charlie. Then I felt worse than ever; but I kept on praying, till at last I grew calm, and entreated Him, if Charlie could never see again, to give me strength

to devote all my time to him, and to make mother willing that I should give up school and go and read to him all day, as long as he lived; for I had known for some weeks that the doctor thought he must die that summer. Mother was willing, for she felt that I could not do enough for him; so for three months I was at his house all the time. I chopped wood, and drew the water, made the fire, ran on errands, and read to Charlie. I never once thought that they were big bundles that I was carrying about, and the boys never laughed at me. I could not help growing better while with Charlie. He wanted me to read the Bible to him, and then we would make acrostics of our names from the verses that we recollected. We sang hymns together, and as he grew weaker I would sing him to sleep, and bathe his heated eyes — oh, those poor, poor eyes, how they burnt! Sometimes he would smother his face in the feather bed to stop the pain; and then when he was well enough to crawl about the room, he carried a little block in his hand with a strap fastened

on to it for a handle, and would hold it out at some distance from him, as a guide to his steps, knowing that he must not go where it struck. One morning he was too tired to even sit up in bed, but turned on his pillows to lay his head against my shoulder, and fell asleep, never to wake again in this world."

Will's last words could scarcely be heard, for he never could recall that time without suffering. Frank and Jennie were both weeping; at last one of them said,—

"And Charlie's mother?"


"She never was strong again," replied Will. "I went to see her every day, as when Charlie lived, and tried to do for her as he would have done. Our own mother was very kind, and found some one to stay with her, and finally to nurse her, until, not long after, she went to Charlie. My only comfort was, that I had tried my very utmost to aid and cheer them both, and that the doctor said, that my deed had hastened neither Charlie's death nor his mother's. I think I really suffered more than they; but I gained the knowledge

how to pray, and, from the day when it happened to this hour, I have felt God constantly with me; but it is far easier to gain that knowledge and feeling from what I have told you, than to undergo yourselves the same wrong-doing and suffering as mine."

They sat in silence for some time till Maud awoke, wondering what made them all so quiet.

CHAPTER V.

THE LETTER.

RANK'S interest in the paper-hanging business had not flagged, though he was very tired of going up and down the short ladder, necessary in order to reach the upper part of the wall. He felt, as Jennie had said, that it would take years "to get to rights;" and Will had begun to talk of working on the farm, lest old Ben would get behind-hand, for haying time was not very far off. Then Frank wanted to learn the mysteries of trout-fishing, before the black flies came, else he would be obliged to cover his face with pennyroyal essence to drive them off, which would make him copper-colored, and very disagreeable to Maud, who was specially fond of cologne.

"I do wish there were some boys round

here," said poor Frank; and he could not help sighing.

"How would you like to send for one of your schoolmates to come down and see you?" asked Will.

"Like it! Why, I should like it first-rate. We would have really jolly times then. Invite some big boy, who could be a beau for Jenny," added he mischievously.

"No, I thank you. I prefer to choose my own acquaintances."

"Whom do you want to come? What boy?" asked Will.

"I like Jim best, but he likes roast beef, and would soon be worn out with fried pork one day, dried beef the next, and salt beef once a week; salt fish, we had that yesterday. Jennie will be like Lot's wife soon."

"Even if there had been ten righteous men in Sodom, you wouldn't have been one of them," said Jennie.

"Will can be Lot," replied Frank; "this cabin is his tent, and Sodom is Bangor or Boston. Here is Maud—what is she? Oh'

Maud shall be baby Moses in the bul-rushes."

"Frank, you goose, Moses was a boy."

"Well, I don't know any other baby in the Bible."

"Poor little Maud Moses come here," called Jennie; "see, kitty can't go in the hole."

"I wonder if Frank knows why: he understands so much about natural history," said Will. "These long hairs that you call the kitty's smellers are her measuring tools; when she wants to go into any corner or underground place, she knows that if she can put her head through without hurting these long hairs, it is safe for her to venture; but if the place is so narrow that it touches them, she beats a retreat."

"I shouldn't think the tingling was worth minding, if she is after a rat," said Frank.

"Perhaps only the end of the hairs tingle, while the real pain is in the brain back of them."

"Cats don't have brains, but toads do," asserted Frank. "I knew a toad that sud-

denly lost an eye or grew squint-eyed, so that when he tried to catch flies, he could not calculate the right distance to jump, and bump he would go against a stone; and then he would see a cricket on his other side and would cock up his head, and say, 'now I'll have you,' and away he would hop, off beyond the cricket. At last, however, he learnt how, and didn't have to starve, though he grew very thin before he learnt."

"That wasn't brains in the toad, any more than in the cat," said Jennie. "Books call it instinct. I should like to know what is the difference between instinct and brains."

"Let me tell you something about the brain," said Will. "It is divided into two parts, called the cerebrum and the cerebellum."

"Called what?" interposed Frank.

"Never mind the names; they won't help you; only remember that one of these parts helps us to measure distance as the toad did; that is, to decide how far off is any place or object, and to know the best way to reach

it; the other part makes us wish to act and move. Well, a certain doctor had two pigeons, and from one bird he took out one part of the brain, and from the other bird he removed the other part, so that it left each bird with only half a brain."

"Didn't he hurt them?" asked Jennie.

"No, I guess not. It was very funny to see them. One couldn't help laughing, and yet it made one feel sad. One little pigeon would want to go over into the left-hand corner of the room, for instance; so he would spread his wings and begin to fly all right as he thought; but the first thing he knew, there he would be in the right hand corner, as badly off as your squint-eyed toad. One might push and try to drive away the other pigeon, and he wouldn't stir, or else he would roll over, and slowly get up on his feet again, for he didn't care what became of him."

"Oh, poor little thing!" said Jennie; "he had the worst of it, not even to care what he did: he must have been so wretched."

"He didn't know he was wretched; I pity

the other one most, to constantly try to do something and never succeed ; if I can't be somebody great, I don't want to be anybody," said Frank.

"Bad English, Frank," answered Will, "and worse ambition ; we must each do our best, like " —

"Oh, please don't draw a moral : that's what spoils Esop's fables."

"I won't," replied Will, laughing ; "but I'll preach a sermon about boys making the most of their brains, and if, after all, they do not make a mark in the world, not to be disappointed ; but to care a great deal about being honest and loving God and helping their fellow-men. Now, wouldn't you rather have had the moral : it would have been shorter."

"No, Will, I like your sermons, and I often think them over after I am in bed."

"I can't bear children's sermons" said Jennie, "when the minister likens the virtues to flowers, and says now you must 'wear this, and now you must wear that.' He ought to

come right out and say, you ought to be humble-minded, and not say, 'my dear little girl, try to wear the lily of the valley, to-day.' I never want to see another lily of the valley."

"I never heard such a sermon, Jennie."

"I have," replied she. "Once I did hear a sermon, one to children I mean, that was real good. I smoothed the salt-cellars next day, and dusted so nicely, and pinned Frank's collar straight, because the minister said that I mustn't be waiting for great things to do; that God would never give me such opportunities, unless I did every little thing well, and if He didn't after all give me great occasions when I could act grandly, I must not grumble, because He knew best; and that when I loved him very dearly for his own sake and not because He was good to me, I should see His way was the best; and that, without knowing it, I might have had a little mite of ambition or self-conceit in my heart, which had made me think I was fitted for great deeds."

"He might have added," said Will, "that every thing done from love of God was right, even if it were sweeping or dusting. What does Maud think?"

"Maud want to see mamma and God."

"Won't Maud believe that God loves her, though she can't see him, when she thinks that God gave Maud brother Frank and sister Jennie, and all Maud's happy days?"

"Maud loves God and thanks him. Maud gets down on the floor when Jennie does and thanks heavenly Father. Jennie stay on the floor a long time: Maud get tired and go to sleep."

"Maud better go to bed now, while Frank can sit up a little longer and tell me if he has chosen a companion for the wilderness," was Will's answer.

"I don't know what to do," replied Frank. "Jim wants roast beef; and Nat is proud of being the best base-ball player in the school, so he would want to be on hand for the games; and Ham must have soda water every recess; oh, I don't know any one!"

"I shouldn't think any of those boys would do. Can't you think of some one else?"

"I don't know," said Frank slowly. "There is Hal, the washerwoman's son, but — I suppose he would like to come more than any of the other boys. He is smart enough; Mr. Hale calls him his best scholar and he is a trump at games, but — if we ever do go back again to Boston, the fellows would think it funny that I asked him. He would like it first rate, for he has never been much in the country. It would be fun to have him go off fishing with me. You wouldn't be afraid to trust me then. He isn't a bit mean and never fibs or prompts. I know one day when Bob prompted a boy and he took the prompt, Hal told him he did wrong and that he would soon be a dead-head, if he was prompted all through life. Why, one of the boys writes all his answers to his sums on his finger nails. Mr. Hale punished Jim nicely for that. You see, Jim had written with a very black pencil on his nails, and didn't expect to be called up

to the blackboard, but he was; Mr. Hale wanted to see his hands, he thought they looked so dirty; and when Jim put them in his mouth, Hale told him not to; but he began to rub with his tongue so furiously, that Hale thought something was to pay, and caught hold of one of Jim's hands while he put on his spectacles; then he bent down close to his fingers and said, 'very dirty, very dirty, some peculiar substance; I fear, poison. I have some castor-oil in my desk. You better have a dose at once.' Oh! how Jim worked, and how he tried to get away his hand! Hale made one of the boys bring the bottle and a spoon, and Jim swallowed it down, without saying a word; but I guess he didn't write or prompt any more, for we all plagued him about it."

Frank paused; Will was still working on his door for the kitchen shelves. "Do tell me what to do," urged Frank. "Where could Hal sleep?" Will made no answer.

"Couldn't he sleep on the floor?" asked Frank.

"Yes."

"What would be the harm if he did?"

"No harm."

"Something is the matter; you keep on whittling as if you didn't care. Could I sleep on the floor?"

"Yes, I should think so," and Will smiled pleasantly.

"Oh, I see!" said Frank, "you thought I was selfish. It wouldn't have been extra polite to let him sleep on the floor. Can't I write to him this minute?"

"But remember," said Will, "that first place Hal is a washerwoman's son; secondly, you'll have to sleep on the floor; and, thirdly, you must always be kind to him."

"You are making fun of me," answered Frank. "It was shabby in me to care about his mother being a washerwoman, and I really don't care; and it will make me straight to sleep on the floor; only he must not love Maud; she belongs to me."

"I thought I heard Maud asking you to play with her to-day," observed Will.

"So she did," replied Frank. "I couldn't go then. I was papering. When I had finished I played with her a long time. I know what you are going to say; you think I was selfish to keep her waiting, and I guess I was. Mayn't I write to Hal now, before I go to bed?" So Frank wrote slowly but in full round hand, which could be read at the distance of a yard:

DEAR HAL,—I am well; I hope you are well. Brother Will says I may ask you to come down and make me a visit. We'll have some fun. Come right off. You go to the Eastern depot, and when they call out Berwick, you must buy some sponge-cake; it is first-rate. Be sure to come. Your friend,

FRANK.

To this short epistle, Will added a longer one to Hal's mother, begging her to allow her son to pass the summer with them.


"Now go to bed," said Will; "sleep tight, wake up bright, in the morning light."

"Oh! first I must see a star," answered Frank. "There is one. I wish I may, I wish

I might, have the wish, I wish to-night.
Now, let us hook fingers and wish. Oh! you
spoke first and I shall get my wish. Good-
night."

CHAPTER VI.

A SUNDAY.

HE next day was Sunday. Jennie's first thought was, "No church to-day, that's one good thing. It won't be a very long day, for there is breakfast, dinner and tea to get, and clean clothes to be taken out for the children. I ought to have done that last night: mother always did. If any one had told me two weeks ago, that this Sunday morning I should be down here in Maine, keeping house and taking care of Maud and Frank, and telling a big girl older than myself what to do, I should have thought whoever said such a thing was crazy. I don't see what made me act so when we left Boston. Somehow I don't feel cross down here, and I have not imposed on Martha once. She thinks I am so smart, that my pride is up, to show her

I really am smart. How lucky mother made me bake and cook and cut my dresses last winter. What should I have done, if she had not taught me? Dear mother! (and Jennie's tears began to fall.) Perhaps she knew she couldn't live, and that is why she told Aunt Clara to send me home. Dear little Maud! she told me last night that she loved me most as much as she loved mamma, but God loved mamma more than she did. She and Will put together will make me good. Wouldn't it be a joke if I should really turn out good? I mean to try harder and harder every day. One to begin, two to make ready. I must not lie in bed any longer, while Maud is asleep I shall have time to read a whole chapter."

So Jennie thought this bright Sunday morning. It was always so quiet where they lived, that it could not be any quieter on this day; but what was missed in increased stillness was gained in sweetness. One knew that the birds were singing hymns and not school songs to-day; even the hens had a softer note in their cackle, and the cows made

a lazier, more patient sound, and the pigs hardly grunted. It may all have been imagination ; for cows chew their cud, and hens lay eggs, and pigs are as gluttonous on Sunday as on Monday, yet somehow Jennie was sure that they knew they were going to be particularly happy.

At breakfast Will said, " Who is going to church with me ? " Jennie's countenance fell, her good resolutions began to vanish, but she made a choking effort and said, " I will go." " And I too," said both Frank and Maud.

" If I fixes all ready agin we go," said Martha, " I want to stay over there all day ; and if I don't get home to-night, you needn't worry. I'll be home agin the cocks crow in the morning."

" Where is over there ? " asked Jennie.

" Law's sakes, don't yer know ? over there is the settlement. Agin Will came, they drank and played cards all day, my father along with 'em," added she sorrowfully ; " but now, there's never a barrel tapped nor a card touched, least wise till long arter cold sass."

• Cold sass," ejaculated Jennie.

"You beat the Dutch. Cold sass is Sunday dinner, dried apple-pie, bread and butter, nuthin' hot, savin' maybe a cup of tea. I must be stirring and get things ready." Martha bustled about, shook the beds and washed the dishes and set the table with Jennie's help.

"It is time we were off," called Will, and taking Maud's hand he led the way. At the settlement they went up to the big man's house, into the great company parlor. Soon, men, women, and children straggled in, not more than thirty all told, evidently in their Sunday best clothes; the men's coats were of nicer material than that they wore every day, but of ancient date; for while worn only once a week for many years, their owners' shoulders had continued to increase in breadth, the coat remaining of its original narrowness, till finally it presented a running-up-hill appearance, as if the waist were already somewhat near the shoulders, and that if the tails could ever get there how happy

they would be. The women's dress testified to their vanity and their want of skill and the children wore hats and no shoes, or shoes and no hats. Here was future work for Jenny.

All these people energetically shook hands with Will, who seemed very glad to see them. Little Maud seated in Jennie's lap won every one's heart, while Frank soon knew the boys' names and had made each one promise to come and see him. Most of the older people brought a wooden chair or a three-legged stool. When all were seated, Will moved to the farther end of the room, and read the parable of the prodigal son. Closing the book, he slowly repeated the Lord's prayer, in which all joined. He then explained the parable in simple words. Every eye was turned upon him with eager interest; for he made each fear, that perhaps the story might be applicable to him or her, so vivid was his description. After another short and simple prayer they sang two or three hymns. This part of the service had always troubled Will, for he could not sing himself, and these peo-

ple needed some one to lead them ; he had hoped that Jennie would aid him, but if she should, it must be by her own resolve. Great was his delight therefore, when he heard her clear, sweet voice amidst the others, who gained more courage themselves, supported by her. After a pause, she began a favorite hymn of her mother's, thinking that every one else must know it by heart, because her mother did. No one knew it, however ; and Jennie sang it alone, hardly conscious whether others had joined her or not, for her head was bent over Maud's shoulders, and her thoughts had gone back to the last Sunday when she had sung it for her dying mother. When her voice ceased, two or three old men brushed their coat sleeve over their eyes, and a little boy whispered, "is that like the angels?" Jennie knew not what any one said or thought ; she was praying that her daily life, like her mother's, might be "nearer God" and was hardly aware that Will had dismissed them, until the general rising made her look up.

A middle-aged-looking woman crossed the room, and holding out her hand to Jennie, said, "Could yer find the time to come and sing that to my old ma'am? She's bed-ridden, and Will allers talks and prays with her arter meetin'. Would yer mind coming?" Poor Jennie was very much embarrassed. "Well, yer needn't come, if yer don't want to. It is no great show arter all."

"Oh! please ma'am," said Jennie, "it isn't that I don't want to come, only I don't know how; I never sang to any one but mother."

"Law now, if that's all, 'tain't more work to sing to one person than to twenty."

"My sister is timid," said Will, coming to Jennie's help, "but she would be very glad to do any thing she could, to make your mother more comfortable." "Yes, indeed I would," added Jennie, eagerly.

The woman turned away, whispering to her neighbor, "why she's like a scared chicken, if a body speaks to her; she hain't got a mite of pluck like my Betsey Ann."

"Come, children," called Will, "let us sit down on the grass by the doorstep, and see who remembers what I told you last Sunday." Some fifteen children followed him, hanging on to his hands and coat, for he was as great a favorite with them as with their parents.

"Who, did I tell you, was the first person that we read of in the Bible?"

"Adam," they shouted.

"Right; what kind of a man was he, — good, bad, or indifferent?"

"He warn't very bad: he only did one naughty thing, that wasn't much," answered one boy.

"Yes, he was bad, real bad, he oughter have known better. God told him what was right," said another.

"It warn't more than clear, sheer carelessness; he sort of forgot all about it; he didn't mean any harm," replied the first child.

"Supposin' now," said one boy, "I give you a punch like that," at the same time thrusting his elbow into his companion's side

"I oughter have known better, but it warn't nuthin' but carelessness."

"You did know better, you mean," —

"Stop, stop boys, no fighting or calling names. Bob was wrong to hurt you, and you are wrong to be angry. Both of you sit quietly down and listen." They obeyed with angry glances.

"Jim," asked Will, "what made Cain kill Abel?"

"Anger," he answered promptly; "but I ain't a going to kill Bob, a feller can't help being angry when he is punched," said he rubbing his lame side.

"It may be hard work not to get angry, but it is the very work that God has given you to do. God knows that you have a quick temper, and so he has made your conscience very loud and sharp, that you can hear it telling you in the midst of your passion to take down your hand, and stop one second before you strike; and if you stop one second, then you will stop long enough to ask God to help you not to strike again."

"That's what you told us last Sunday, and Kitty and me tried it all the week, and we've had the nicest week we've had for ever so long. We said two or three things in real earnest to God, but if we say more, we forget what we've been saying and it all goes wrong. Kitty and me once nearly got mad at each other, but we waited just a minute and then saw each other's lips moving."

"If Adam had asked God to help him persuade Eve that she was naughty to eat the apple, and that he wouldn't be naughty, just because she was, wouldn't God have helped him and then he needn't have disobeyed?" asked another child.

"I am afraid," answered Will, "that Adam did not pray, or he would not have done wrong."

"Who told Adam how to pray? he hadn't any father or mother," inquired some one.

"God taught him," said Will, reverently. "Adam's conscience told him what was right or wrong just as ours does. If you wanted something very much, which you

felt your mother could give you, could you help asking her?"

"No," they all cried.

"Just so, if we ask God to make us good and obedient, and try ourselves, he will help us. Now this week I want you to promise me that you will do two things; last week, you began with one,—that you would stop a minute and say 'God help me not to be angry,' before you made up your mind to strike; this week I want you to try and mind, but as children can't be perfect at once, I will give you twenty exceptions, when I fear you will be disobedient in spite of all your resolutions. Just as you prayed not to be angry, so you must pray to be obedient."

"Twenty!" said they, "one or two is enough."

"Oh! don't be too sure. Wait till next Sunday and then tell me," he answered. "Now tell me what I talked about last week."

Almost every one had something to say, and when at last silence began to reign or

memory to fail, Will took up the subject and now reading and now talking told them about Jesus, making it so plain to their understanding, that the children were sure that if they had been little Jews, they should have known how great and good a man he was.

The children sang two or three hymns, learnt a few verses by heart, Will repeating the words to them, and then all knelt down whilst he offered a child's prayer in a child's words, and the little service was ended.

Jennie and Will walked over to Aunt Nancy's, leaving Maud provided with cookies at a friend's house. They found the sick woman wrapt in red and yellow flannels, though it was summer. "Heaven bless you, dear," said she to Will. "God heard your prayers and sent me a contented heart with all the pain. Ah Miss!" spoke she, turning to Jennie, "your face looks as peaceful as Will's; he has been more than sunlight to us, 'cause he made our hearts quiet. Daughter, fix my pillows and he'll pray with me."

Will prayed and Jennie sang, till the tears

rolled down the withered cheeks of the old woman. "Oh!" cried she, "if my man could have heard you, he'd have wanted to go. My head is swimming with the music: it is all saints and golden streets and my little baby that died. Good-by, good-by. Come again."

Will and Jennie walked slowly home, telling Frank and Maud what they had seen. "I should not object to going to church every day, if you were the minister," said Jennie.

"How did Maud like church?" asked her brother after tea.

"Maud like church; me heard you say Jesus."

"Shall brother Will tell Maud about Jesus?"

She nodded her head, laid it on his shoulder, looking up into his face with her deep blue eyes. "Jesus was some one whom God loved ever so much. Will cannot begin to tell Maud how much God loved Jesus, and how good Jesus was, and how he tried all day long to make people good and happy;

and by and by he went to heaven and lived with God all the time."

Maud had assented to every thing he said, with her peculiar monosyllabic sound, more like "um, um," accompanied by a quaint downward jerk of the head; and in her usual fashion, began to repeat his words.

"God love Jesus, Jesus good man, love little children, Jesus with heavenly Father now, with mamma too. Maud love Jesus." She was silent a few minutes, but with a sudden burst of trouble cried, "Where God, mamma, Jesus?"

"In heaven," answered Will.

"Where heaven? tell Maud where heaven is!"

"Brother Will doesn't know where heaven is, but by and by Maud shall know and Will know too."

"Um, um," was her satisfied reply, wishing "to go sleepy." "Jennie sing for Maud, when Maud take off pretty dress."

"Yes, dear," said Jennie, bearing off her little sister into their own room.

CHAPTER VII.

FISHING.



THE second week passed by more quickly than the first had done. With always enough to do, no one was in a hurry. Will had spoken of regular lessons for Frank, to be recited in the evening, and learnt in the noon hours when it was too hot to be out of doors. Frank was a bright scholar, to whom college had been the end and aim of school. He had always stood first in his class, was ready to help the duller boys, and to take his part in any game. The change in his life had obliged him to give up even more than Jennie had done. This Will knew, and was very anxious that Frank should lose as little as possible. He still hoped to send him to college; and trusted that while these two years must

necessarily retard him somewhat in his studies, he yet would gain such a strong constitution as would enable him, by future diligent work, to make up for lost time. Meanwhile, he would teach him all that he knew, procuring for him the best books. Three hours were enough for study now; but when autumn and winter came, the number must be doubled. Will also hoped to teach Jennie, who threatened, in turn, to teach him. By the beginning of another week, Will declared that study-hours must be observed by Frank, who worked all the harder therefore on his papering of the cabin. At times he felt disposed to wait till Hal came; but on the other hand he could astonish him by doing it all himself, and Hal and he could embellish it at leisure. His own room and Jennie's were done, but the kitchen was still to be finished.

"There, I'll make a promise to myself. Hal cannot possibly come before Thursday; his mother won't get the letter till Tuesday, — no, not till Wednesday morning, — and

then she'll have to get him ready. Oh dear, he won't get here till Saturday! perhaps I shall have a letter Friday, saying he is coming. Any way, I will promise myself that I won't go to the depot for him, unless I have finished the kitchen; and as it would be a dreadful disappointment not to go, of course I shall get it done. It isn't very much, after all, for the chimney takes up so much room. Oh! I have another idea. Hal and I could fill up all these little holes in the floor with putty."

These holes were made by the spikes which the loggers wear in their shoes in the winter, similar to the spikes that the Swiss use in travelling over their glaciers.

So Frank worked hard, and completed his self-imposed task on Friday night. Jennie had made him a plum-cake for supper, as a surprise and reward. He insisted upon enacting "Little Jack Horner, who sat in a corner, eating a Christmas-pie;" only this modern Jack Horner gave as much cake to every one else as he eat himself. Friday night brought a yellow envelope, directed to Frank, — not

even to his brother's care,—in a hand as large and round as his own.

“Dear Frank,” it read, “mother says she is very much obliged to your brother, and thinks he is very kind to invite me. I will come Saturday. We will have jolly times; I have not been in the country since I was very little. Good-by now. I forgot to tell you I can't buy any sponge-cake, because I shall not have money enough.

“Yours affectionately,

“HAL.”

Saturday afternoon, they all went over to the depot with old Ben, who was to assist in carrying Hal's trunk; for it was much easier to transport any light luggage by hand, than to send to the settlement for a wagon. Soon as the whistle was heard, and Hal's head seen out of the window, Frank began to dance up and down the platform. “Holloa, old boy, there you are!” was his greeting; and the two boys shook hands as heartily as if they were grown men. They longed to throw their arms round each other's neck, but were restrained by a certain sort of manliness, as

they termed it. Hal was quickly at his ease; Jennie was glad to see him, and Maud, being still young, kissed him again and again. At night, he whispered to Frank that he was sure he should be very much afraid of Will with his solemn eyes, and hoped he should not get into any mischief. Frank slept on the floor, and thought it so much better than the bed, that Hal was very anxious to leave the cot to Will. "Besides," he said, "I know I shall keep him awake, twisting and turning; and I like him so much, I don't want to disturb him, night or day." "What! in spite of his eyes?" asked Frank.

"It is too bad to bring that up against me, when I had forgotten all about it," replied Hal.

One morning, after Hal had been with them three or four days, both the boys expressed a great desire to go trouting. "Do, please, let us go," said Frank. "Hal has come, it is a cloudy day, so there is nothing to prevent."

"What! leave the farm and the lessons and

the women folk, just to go fishing?" asked Will.

"If it were not for Maud, the women folk could go," said Jennie. "Never mind, I can make the coverings for the trunks to-day; and I mean to stuff the top with straw, so that it shall have a soft, velvety look. Martha says, all the beds round here are nothing but ticks, filled with straw, and that one is lucky not to find a nest of mice in it every day. She says she is no kin to the real princess, who felt the three peas through all the feather-beds; for once she slept on three cunning little mice and their big mamma, and never knew it."

"Do let us hurry," said Frank. "How mum you are, Hal! what is the matter? your eyes are dancing, and your fingers jerking."

"Oh, it will be such fun! I used to catch flounders from Cambridge Bridge; but to go off fishing a whole day,—it is bunkum! There, mother told me not to use any slang. I can't help it, for it *is* bunkum," reiterated Hal.

"If Martha and Jennie will put us up some luncheon, — hard-boiled eggs and some bread and butter. Haven't you a dried-apple pie, — the pastry a week old, and the apples several years in age?" asked Will.

"Yes," replied Martha: "I made 'em long agin the children came; there are two left, you can take both. But mind, never you bring 'em back; they'll do for the birds, they don't get pies often."

"Here, Frank and Hal, are two old mustard-pots," called Will; "now run off and dig some worms, — big ones, — and plenty of earth, so that they can have something to eat, until the trout eats them."

An hour's time found them ready to start. Will carried a long pole over his shoulder; Hal, the luncheon; and Frank, a basket, which held the lines, bait, and a lot of old nails. They struck into the woods, soon coming to a stony little stream, overarched by trees.

"Here is a shady place," said Will; "we must stop and fix our tackle. First, I must

cut you two long poles. Run about in the bushes, and see who can find the straightest one; it must be six feet long, — if eight feet, better still.” The boys soon came back, and Will contrived, through pruning and whittling, to make two good, straight poles. Then he showed the boys how to fasten their line on to the pole, and to make a sinker by tying old nails together; and then to “gange” the hook on to the line. This was a difficult operation: the boys tried several times in vain; finally Will did it for them, bidding them to practise on the art when at home in the evening. Frank was rather disgusted at feeling the worms wriggle in his fingers whilst baiting his hook, though Hal said he didn’t care; he liked to make them stay put for once in their lives, and wondered if worms ever did die. Every thing being ready, Will proceeded to throw his line by a sudden, careful jerk off into the centre of the stream, so as to keep it free from the overhanging branches of the tree.

“Neither of you must speak,” said Will,

“because the trout’s hearing is very sharp, and if he hears a voice, he thinks the worm is charmed,—is a magician in some disguise; while if all is still, he does not try to control his appetite, but shoots straight for the worm so soon as he sees him.”

“Why, can’t the trout smell the worm, if he is blind?” inquired Frank.

“You have spoken, and the spell is broken. Imagine you are going to a church-meeting of trouts, and see if that won’t keep you quiet,” answered Will.

Both boys put their hands on their ears, as if the organ of speech existed there, and with gaping mouths and wide-open eyes waited one, two, five minutes; when, with a straight, quick motion, Will had drawn his line out of the water, and there was a beautiful, speckled trout dangling on the end. It was no use, they could not control a scream of delight; it was the first time they had ever seen such a sight. Will laid it on the rock, that they might watch the play of light and shade on its sides. The poor little thing

quivered and trembled, and rolled over and over uneasily.

"O Will! don't," sobbed Frank, as he took the hook out of its mouth; "don't, don't, put it back;" and the boy's tears broke forth, while Will hardly knew what to do or say.

"It is cruel," said Hal, at last.

"No, it isn't," quickly interrupted Frank, "or Will would not do it. Only, I don't see why it isn't cruel; but then, of course, it is'nt. Does it hurt them very much to have the hook taken off?"

"Not at all," replied Will; "a fish in any case has very little feeling, and if I hold its head still, I can take away the hook without causing the least pain."

"It is as bad as drawing a double tooth," thought Hal.

"It would be cruel to fish," continued Will, "if we did it merely for fun; as soon as we have caught enough for our supper, we ought to wait till another day. If we ought not to catch fish for food, we ought not to kill chickens or cows. God has made all these

creatures to give us nourishment; and is willing that we should deprive them of life, if we treat them kindly whilst they are alive, and never kill them wantonly."

"It is a great deal worse than hanging a man. Then, you only help him into the next world; but fishes can't live again. They haven't any heaven. And I am hungry," said Hal.

There were plenty of wild raspberries within reach, which they, removing the under-crust of their pie, laid upon the dried apple, thus imparting to the aged fruit a fresh and peculiar relish. Frank soon decided upon the propriety and even duty of supporting physical life by the means of fish, and Hal concluded that they had proved themselves very chicken-hearted boys.

With deplorable eagerness they swung their poles over the brook, or standing on some wet, mossy stone, more slowly dipped in their line. Their motions were so quick, and the certainty that they had caught a trout so frequent, that they frightened away the little creatures, whom they saw darting

about. Frank would scream, "now I've got one," then tug away at his line and up would come a piece of moss or some good for nothing minnow. Will, taking life leisurely, seated himself on a rock and threw in his line, in a careful quiet manner; the trout bit as fast as ne could take them off the hook. So that Hal and Frank, in despair, imitated him more closely. A soberer trio could not be found; to be sure, the boys made constant mistakes through involuntary jerks or half spoken sighs, still on the average they caught one trout for every six that they missed. What more could be expected? When their luck began to fail, they wandered farther up the stream, selecting the coolest nooks as the best fishing grounds, or some old moss-covered log, lying across the stream; or the roots of some aged tree, buried half in water and half in land. At last, Will declared, that as they had caught sufficient, further fishing would be cruel. "Oh, no! it wouldn't," cried both boys, "it is such fun, we want to catch a dozen apiece and then we'll go."

"Ah! who thought I was cruel this morning? and now I shall have to think the same of you."

The boys laughed, but shouldered the sticks which held the trout; these sticks were short branches with a hook at one end, to prevent the loss of any fish, and pointed at the other, so that it could easily pass through the gills of the fish.

"Did you really mean, Will, that the trout could hear us?" asked Frank.

"I don't know exactly what I meant; the best fisherman I ever knew told me it was superstition to fancy that trout were scared away by a man's voice, that he always talked and joked and caught as many fish as he chose, but was very careful not to let the fish see him or his shadow."

"Oh! what is that noise?" exclaimed Hal.

"That is a loon," answered Will.

"What an awful sound, like a crying child."

"It is more like a wail, and it makes me

think how sad and lonely Jenny and Maud must be without us. It is their first day alone. We have had the fun, and they the work."


"We are bringing work to them, with all these trout to fry," said Frank.

"Old Ben eats a trout as you would a piece of macaroni; he takes it up daintily in his fingers, and looks it all over to enjoy both seeing and eating it; in a twinkling, nothing but the head remains," said Will.

"Oh! I could do that, the trout are so small," answered Hal. "Here we are home, and I am glad for one. I am all stiff and lame with such a day's tramp."

CHAPTER VIII.

HAL'S STORY.

 SEVERAL weeks had passed, and Martha still shared Jennie's room. Ben's consent to the removal had been gained, but when the time came for him to leave his old hut by the depot, he was very stubborn. Nothing that Will could say was of any avail. "Take my traps if you want 'em, but yer won't catch me;" he said. One day they took him at his word and bore off, in the universal team, a rickety bedstead, a rickety bureau, a table and a few kitchen utensils, leaving him to sleep in the depot for a day or two. All Will's family and a hired man besides had been hard at work, repairing the barn; they had fastened new boards in place of the rotten ones, made the doors and roof tight, new boarded the floor and put in glass windows. Hal and Frank had trans-

planted woodbines and Martha had scrubbed. Now she was turned out, and Will and Jennie worked alone. For greater secrecy they hung newspapers at the windows, which caused Martha, who had secretly aspired to curtains, a severe twinge of pain, though she knew not how they could be obtained unless they dropped down from the skies.

"Jennie," said Will, "you must go over and see what you can do with Ben; the house is all ready, and Martha is so impatient to see her new home, that she does not mind her work."

"I know it," replied Jennie; "the poor girl cried herself to sleep, last night. She is so afraid her father will not come after all."

"No one can induce him if you can't. I fear our labor will be lost, the hope of benefiting him gone, and Martha still obliged to occupy your room," was her brother's answer.

"I can try," sighed Jennie. "I'll go now, I shall have time before tea. Let me first set the table for them, because if he does come, some supper will make him feel more comfortable."

She soon started on her walk, and, on approaching Ben's hut, found him stretched on the ground, smoking. It looked hopeless. "Good evening, Ben." He did not move. "Good evening, uncle Ben," said she more loudly, making up her mind to use the term of relationship, which once before had gained her a desired point. The old man slowly turned himself up, in an all over and over manner, every limb and muscle turning an independent somerset.

"Pretty place for the likes of you at this time o' night. Don't that brother of yours know no better? Go home as fast as you can."

"I am afraid to go alone, uncle Ben."

"No, you been't, that's a dodge to get me to go along with yer? I know your ways and I ain't a going to stir."

Jennie sat down on the grass and caught hold of his hand, which for very joy and shame he could not draw away. "Now, uncle Ben, listen to me. Here I've come way down to Maine to live, and it is very lonely.

I miss mother more than you can tell (Jennie's eyes began to fill with tears), and I want so much to be friends with every one, and you won't be my friend. I have worked so hard, fixing up the little cabin for you ; it is real pretty, and I am all tired out ; but I wouldn't care one bit if you would only be kind to me and come and live where I could see you all the time ;" and, exhausted with her walk and excitement, Jennie burst into a real fit of weeping, her first hearty cry since she left Boston. " O Ben ! I am so lonely, you don't know any thing about it. I don't have to work hard, but it is so dreadfully lonely ; if it were not for Maud and Will and Frank I could not bear it, and I don't want them to know how badly I feel ; you won't tell Will, Ben, will you ? Please do, do come ; I shall feel safer to have you near."

" There now, there now, hush my pretty, don't yer cry," said Ben. " I won't tell Will, but jest come to me when you want to cry, and I'll go with yer to the end of the world, if yer want me, and yer shall be as safe as if

all the governors were round yer. There now ; hush a bit."

Jennie slowly dried her tears and rose, still keeping close hold of Ben's hand ; they walked along in silence, she seeming so weary, that Ben at last mustered courage to say, "would yer mind now, if I should jes' hoist you up, and carry you a bit?" Jennie smiled and held out her arms like a little child.

Ben lifted her up, and, with loving care, carried her nearly home ; he tried to brighten her in his rough way, and was so successful, that, by the time they were in sight of the cabin, she ran forward, calling, "Come Martha, come Will!" and opened the door of Ben's future home, pushing him and Martha inside.

"I never! it beats all. Who ever saw the likes?" were only a few of the expressions that the new owners uttered, as they looked round their dwelling. There was a table all set, with blue cups and saucers and plates, and a kerosene lamp in the center, while the tea kettle was boiling away over the fire.

"Father, Father!" screamed Martha, and she threw herself on the floor with delight. "Just look, did you ever see any thing so pretty? Is it for me, Jennie? oh! what a cunning little bed, and a chest of drawers and curtains, real live curtains! O dear me! when did you do it all? and I thought there was to be nothing but newspaper at the windows!"

"That is the reason why we put up the newspaper," answered Jennie, "that you might not see what we were doing. Most of the furniture and crockery belonged to mother, but as we do not need them all, you must take good care of them for us. Yesterday afternoon, when you were gone, Will went over to the settlement and brought back some things which we did not have."

"How can I ever thank you! How lovely the white cloth looks on the bureau, and oh what a pretty pincushion!"

"I made that for you!" answered Jennie, "and Hal filled it with bran. Frank took an old half barrel and nailed boards on to it for a back, and then stuffed it, and covered it with

chintz for an armchair for you, when you are tired."

"Oh! I never, never! the curtains beat all; what I've always hankered arter," and she fairly cried for joy.

"That is just like a girl, to cry, when she is happy," said Frank. "See Martha, here is Ben's old cot in the store-room, so he can look after the flour and tea when he is sleeping."

"Well, move, will yer, I can't see through yer." "What shall I do, father?" said Martha, shaking his shoulder, "get up, and look about, can't yer move?"

"I see it, Martha," answered he, "and I know what, I never see'd the likes of Jennie and Will fore now. I'll work for 'em till I die, an if I gets into heaven I'll bless 'em. I don't care nothin' for myself, but it is good to see my gal in a respectable home, and made a lady."

"Maud pick flowers and put 'em in Maud's doll's tumbler for you," said the child pointing to a vase on the bureau. Soon they all

went back to their own home, leaving the father and daughter to take their first supper in a clean pretty cabin, a pleasure which Ben had not known for twenty years.

Early the next morning he came over, looking nicer than Jennie had ever seen him, — “to keep company with the house,” he said, as if half ashamed of his well washed hands and face, smooth hair and clean shirt. “Where is Will? I wants him, cause last night I lies awake, thinkin’ on what you and he had done, when all of a sudden I hears sunthin’ like a bear; I gets right up, but it was pitch dark so I didnt see nothin’, but I knowed it was a bear; I knows ’em well, we must sot a trap for him.”

“A trap! hear Hal, is’nt it jolly? a bear trap! and we are going to fix it, I mean Ben is, and we are going to help him,” cried Frank.

“We’ll put it near the house, ’cause they allers comes where they smell little boys,” said Ben. “There’s an old trap in the shed that has caught lots of ’em.” The trap was

found and proved still serviceable. It was a large steel-trap something like a rat-trap, fastened to a chain about eight feet long; the other end of the chain was attached to the middle of a stick of wood, to keep the bear from getting a great way off after his foot was caught in the trap. Ben placed it several yards from the house, and then proceeded to cut down large branches of trees, which he placed in two rows opposite to each other, meeting in a point at the trap, and branching off quite far apart at the other end. He covered the trap with bushes and hung some fishes just beyond it. "Now boys," said Ben, when the trap was finished, "the bear will prowls around, and way off there he'll accidentally strike into this path we've made, and walk leisurely along until, as he comes nearer, he'll smell the fish, and then he'll want to put his foot forward to reach 'em, when up snaps the trap and catches his fore paws; then he'll howl and make a great fuss and try to run off, and can't go fast nor far, for the old trap has got his foot, and we shall go arter him

and kill him. There's the bell for your lessons. Never mind the trap now."

In the evening, when it was too hot to work or read, Will asked Hal if he could not tell them a story. "Tell us a story about yourself, what you have done and what you mean to do?"

"Shall I begin when I was a little bit of a baby?" asked Hal.

"Tell us something about your mother," begged Jennie, "I think I should love her dearly if I knew her."

"You could'nt help loving her," he replied. "She is so good and gentle. She was not always poor. Grandmother used to live in a big house and mother went to school, and when she grew up she went to parties and wore nice clothes. But grandfather lost all his property, and both he and grandmother died in a year's time after that, and left mother all alone without a cent, so she worked in a store until she married father; he was a house painter, and the smell of the paint made him sick. Mother would look so anxious when

he came home at night, and beg him to give up his business; but he had no other trade, so he kept on working. We always had plenty to eat and lived in a brick house, then."

"Had you no brothers nor sisters?" asked Jennie.

"Yes, one brother, that was the worst of it; for when he was two years old, mother went out one day and left him with a woman in the house, and he fell down the cellar stairs and struck his head on the bricks, and after that he grew so queer; he could not talk and seemed to be stupid all the time. At last, father died, and mother had to sell a great deal of the furniture to pay the doctor's bill. I don't remember much about it, for I was only five years old and my brother was six. Mother had cried so much that her eyes were so weak she could not sew, and as she could never leave Charlie she took in washing and had just as much as she could do. As Charlie grew older he sometimes seemed real crazy, and would strike mother, but after he was

himself again, she would hold him in her arms, and he would be so sorry and ask her if he had hurt her very much, and would stroke her face and say, 'will you work for me, mother, just as long as I live, and not let them take me away from you?' and mother would tell him that she would work for him all day long, and he never should go away from her,— then he would fall asleep just like a baby. One of the neighbors gave him a worn out violin, and he would make it sound so funny, telling mother that bye and bye he could play for people to dance, and earn money for her. If he could have rusty old nails and locks and screws, he would be as quiet as a lamb; when all of a sudden, he would fly across the room, and tear his hair and try to bite himself; mother would have to hold him and he would almost try to bite her. It never lasted more than two or three minutes, and afterwards he would sob and cry for hours. At last he had another fall, and grew weaker until he died. All the month he was sick he was never crazy; if mother could

hold his hand he was happy and quiet. I would do most of the work, you don't know how nicely I can wash. I would make the fire and get the meals ready, and sweep and dust, and do a great deal of the washing, all but the starched clothes, and then hang them out on the line, and when Charlie slept, mother ironed them. She was very sick after he died. Every one was so kind, when they found out how poor we were. The ladies for whom she washed sent her broth and jelly, and took her out to ride in their beautiful carriages, and paid her rent until she was strong, and one of them helped mother to move into the little house where we now live, and sent two nice old women to board with her, and that helps to pay the rent. Mother looks after them, and has plenty of washing to do. She only takes the fine kind now, gentlemen's shirts, and ladies' collars and handkerchiefs, all such kind of things; she says she can make a great deal more in this way than washing by the month, or by the dozen. We have real happy times, and in the evening,

after my lessons are learnt, I read aloud to them all, while mother sews and the old women knit socks for me as a Christmas surprise, when I have seen them knitting away every night. Once a fortnight, mother lets me ask two or three boys to tea, and then we play games or puzzles."

"You never asked me," said Frank.

"I thought you would not want to come; I wanted to ask you, but if you had refused it would have made me feel bad."

Frank colored; he remembered that he had been rather ashamed of liking the washer-woman's son as much as he really did, and Hal had guessed at his feeling and would not press himself into his favor. "What did you think when you got my letter?" asked he timidly.

"I never was so surprised in all my life," replied Hal, honestly. "I read your letter twenty times, and could not tell whether or not you really wanted me to come. But when mother read Will's letter, she said you did want me, for he would not have written

himself and said that he did, unless you were in earnest."

"I did want you to come, but I had never written many letters; mine was short, now I think of it, but no shorter than yours. I used to be 'stuck up' I guess, but I have got all over that now, so don't let us talk any more about it."

"Why you began it; but then you never were exactly stuck up; don't you know how you helped me in my arithmetic? I never could have kept my place if you had not explained my sums to me in recess."

It was long after bed-time when Hal's story was ended, and the boys went to sleep dreaming of the bear-trap, which was found undisturbed the next morning, and the next, till Hal and Frank whispered to each other that they guessed Ben was a little nervous.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MOOSE HUNT.



HE hay had been all got in, old Ben had grown accustomed to his new habitation, and Martha had proved herself equal to her new position of housekeeper for her father, without its interfering with her duties to Will's family. She had an assistant in the shape of an old woman, who lived three miles off, but who regarded the distance as a very slight objection, compared with the prospect of making money, by washing once a week for Jennie. She was a born and bred miser, and possessed untold wealth, not in the bank, but tied up in little pieces of cotton, which were put inside her straw bed, for, as she properly observed, "no one would ever think of my keeping money in a tick, with a slit in it wide enough

for the whole world to put their hand in and shake it up. Nuthin' so good to keep off robbers as not seemin' anxious." She had been known to have a tea party once, for six of her friends. No tea or coffee pot presided over the occasion, as "water is the healthiest and cheapest drink when a body's thirsty, and folks needn't be thirsty often." Six slices of bread without butter, "for butter greases the fingers," and six saucers of blueberries without sugar or molasses, made the entertainment; which was a striking contrast to simple but abundant country fare. Whenever she was obliged to purchase such an amount of groceries that it must be brought home in a paper bag, the bag was carefully ironed by some neighbor's fire, because for a dozen such bags she could obtain a cent, perhaps two.

With the added help of this woman, Jennie's two months of Maine life had been very prosperous. She had become so proficient in her motherly cares, that Will now felt he could safely leave her under old Ben's protection, who regarded her with the most

profound admiration and respect. "Jes' to please her" he had given up chewing tobacco, his life-long friend; he used to say "she was as sweet as a pond lily, and that if all women folk were like her, he didn't see for his part what was the use in heaven; if his old woman could have laid her eyes on sich as that flower of a Jennie, she wouldn't have got so riled. Martha speak soft now," he would tell his daughter, "she never screams, and her hair allers is so pretty, and yourn is all over yer; and sich eyes! she made my old ones weak t'other night, when she asked me, so like a frightened rabbit, if she mightn't read me a bit; her voice was jes' as sad as the wind in the pines, when she told me God wanted me to make a man of myself, in my old age too; she said that warn't nothin', that I ought to start right up and be a man, 'cause of you and 'cause God liked it. I'se a great mind to try. I don't like her to think I can't be a man, ef she says I can. Will goes off to-morrow, and I'm a going to look arter her. She'll be lonely like, when he and the boys

are gone. That Maud! what a big fool I be! my eyes begin to ache sure as I thinks on her. 'Praps she'll live and 'praps she won't."

So the old man would often talk to Martha; and then both would work with redoubled energy, for those who had shown them that daily life could be happier and nobler than they had ever imagined. Will, as old Ben had said, was going to start on a moose hunt, as Hal and Frank had been very urgent in requesting this new pleasure, but he had not felt until now, that he could leave his sisters.

They started early Tuesday morning, joining at the settlement an old experienced hunter, who was to be their guide. Their outfit was very simple, a couple of blankets, a pound of tea, salt pork, hard bread, and a small kettle.

After being several hours in the woods, they took a batteau, which is a kind of canoe from twenty to thirty feet long, and only four or four and a half wide; sharp at both ends, with a perfectly flat bottom, and is so

slightly made that it is soon worn out in going over the rocks in the rivers. In summer it is the chief means for the conveyance of all kinds of stores, which in winter can be more easily carried on the ice.

By nightfall they had reached a natural harbor between some rocks, where they prepared for the night, drawing the batteau out on the sand. Their tent was made of two poles, several feet apart, and a piece of cotton thrown over it and the ends fastened to the ground. Plenty of cedar boughs furnished them with beds, and while Frank and Hal ran about for small fuel, Will and the guide drew up some big trunks, to serve as back-logs, to keep the fire alive through the night. Every thing was new to the two boys. Will had fairly to command them to go to sleep, for, with their feet stretched out to the fire, and their heads full of ghost stories, slumber seemed very unimportant. Will and the guide took upon themselves the care of the fire. The boys slept late the next morning, and on awaking were surprised to

find themselves alone in the tent. Will was seated outside, dexterously carving four birch-bark plates and four forks, out of some white twigs; and the guide was cooking trout, larger than any of which they had ever dreamt.

After breakfast was over, they struck their tent, and still leaving their batteau, plunged deeper into the woods, meeting with moose and bear tracks on every side; the travelling was very bad, and poor Hal and Frank feared that after all there wasn't going to be much fun for them. In the midst of their despair, as they were all resting in silence, they heard, saw, felt (they did not know which) something rush by them, with a crunching sound. It was as large as a horse, with long legs and a short body, and its horns down by its sides. "There is a moose!" exclaimed the guide. "'Taint no use now; he is too quick for us, and we are not ready." "Perhaps we can't find another one," said Hal, mournfully. "Oh, yes, you will!" replied the guide. "I will blow my horn, or make a sound like

'ugh! ugh! o-o-o-o-o!' and they'll think it is one of their companions, and come along. Some folks shoot 'em with buckshot, 'cause the creature runs off before you can reload, and one of the shot, if it is buckshot, is sure to hit; but I think it only makes 'em mad, for if not too badly wounded, they go off like the wind, and there's an end on't for you."

"How do you take aim?" asked Will.

"I fire straight and sure, and I never miss. Spring is the best time; when they are drinking, you can hear the water drop from their muzzle, and if you go soft and sure then, you can bring 'em right down. We'll follow up this track. Go quick, sure, and light; put your foot down flat; take it up easy; don't make any noise on the leaves." They followed along some way, when the guide began to call, "Ugh! ugh! o-o-o-o-o!" It had a weird and awful effect in the loneliness of the forest. Suddenly, by a quick turn, they saw a moose fronting them; the guide advanced, and, as the moose slowly turned, took fair aim. It was all over. Every one drew a

long breath. The guide was the first to break the silence. "It is an ugly piece of business. I hate it,—wouldn't do it if it weren't my trade,—but I never kill more than I can trade off."

"It is worse than fishing," said Hal. "I'd rather live in the city all my life than ever do it, and I never will."

"I didn't know, boys," said Will, "that it would be so painful to see a moose-hunt; but we'll all agree together, that it is the last time we ever hunt a moose or deer." "Agreed!" said each.

"What is to be done next?" asked the boys.

"O you young folks, run off, leave that to me; you are too tender-hearted for it, as you ought to be." They did go off, with a kind of shudder. "It makes me quiver all over," said Hal.

"I feel as if I were on pins," declared Frank. "It is bad enough to have the poor creature killed; I don't want to see any more."

"Don't let us talk about it," said Hal, making up a wry face. "Here are berries; let us make some birch-baskets, and gather some fruit for them." When that was done, they found a large rock, under the shelter of which they built a fire, and began to prepare the dinner.

"Hal, let us surprise them with tea made out of the cedar-tree. It won't be very good nor very bad, but very odd, and that is a recommendation," said Frank. They extended a pole from a niche in the rock to a neighboring tree, swung the kettle on it, and put in their cedar-branches. The water, which they got from a neighboring spring, began to boil, and the fragrance to rise, till the boys were in ecstasies. "It will be ever so much nicer than camomile tea, and mother can't often afford to buy other tea." It was on Frank's lips to say, "I am glad I am not so poor;" but he checked himself, and proposed that they should gather as much cedar as Hal could carry home to his mother.

"That is just like you, you are so thought-

ful; but do you think they will let us have so much?"

"I don't know who 'they' is," answered Frank; "the trees don't belong to any one. Perhaps Uncle Sam might call them his, and he would never care."

"It seems queer not to have every thing belong to somebody. In Boston, I can't look in at a candy-store or a bun-shop, without somebody's watching at the window, as if I had no right even to see."

"A cat may look at a king," Hal. "What else shall we have for dinner? Let us fry the pork. I'll tell you: we can take the great drinking-mug, and make a cross-stand to hold it; and then fasten in an upright handle, and hang it on the pole, and stew some blueberries, and soak the crackers in them. I broke a tooth this morning, owing to them."

It was no sooner said than done. Hal fried the pork over the blaze of the fire, holding it by the chop-sticks, till it curled up crisp and brown. With a loud "Halloo, dinner is ready!" they called up the loiterers, who

hastened their steps as the odor of the dinner reached them.

"What capital cooks you are! Cedar-tree tea! It is not bad; it is first-rate, and economical," said Will.

"Won't you tell us what you are going to do with the moose?" asked Frank of the guide, after dinner.

"I've taken off the skin, and that I shall sell to the Indians at Oldtown."

"Oldtown,—where is that?"

"One thing at a time: you are too fast. The Indians use it for moccasins; skins are worth from two dollars and a half to seven dollars. They make tobacco-pouches of the skins of the ears, putting the two together, 'inside to inside;' the meat I shall send to Bangor, where it brings a tolerable price in the market; except the lips and the tongue,—they are such delicate eating, Maud must have them; and the horns,—Hal better take them home to his mother. You won't object to that part of the moose?" Hal's face, more plainly than his words, expressed his thanks.

“Now I will tell you about Oldtown. It is on the Penobscot, and used to be a famous Indian settlement; to be sure the Indians live there now, but it is not much like our idea of an Indian settlement, for it has a bank and seven churches, and is quite a big town divided into four villages. Timber trade and batteaux building make its business. The Indian houses are one or two stories high, and placed in rows, one behind another, with neat little front yards. There are no paths, except such as they make by their own feet in travelling. Then they have a council-house, and a man who is their chief or governor.”

“Mother knew a lady once,” said Hal, “who went out as missionary to the Indians. She had married an Indian, and wanted to make his people more like us; so she went out West and lived there with him and taught school. By and by, her husband died; and she told mother that when they buried him, — oh! I forgot to tell you his father was a chief, — his father came up and kissed her

forehead, which was just the same as if he had said, 'You shall be my own daughter now, and take my son's place to me.' She said that Indians never kiss unless they mean a great deal by it. But something funnier yet happened to her. Another Indian fell in love with her, and sent her a cord of wood all split. She thought he was very kind; but when it was nearly burnt up, a man missionary called to see her, and told her that John (he was the Indian who gave her the wood) expected to marry her. She said she didn't want to marry him. So the missionary had to tell her, that if she didn't marry she would have to go back home to the East to her parents, because the Indian thought she had accepted him, and a woman with them was never allowed to break her promise."

"I don't see what you mean, Hal," said Frank.

"I can't exactly tell what mother said; but when the Indian sent the wood it was like his asking her to burn the same fire with him; that they two should have one fire, just as

father and mother used to; and if she burnt the wood, it was just as good as if she had said she would marry him."

"Indians don't do that way in Oldtown, I know," said the guide; "they are too much like us, and talk out such matters in words, not in actions. Come, it is time we moved."

They began their homeward route by a different trail from that on which they had travelled up the stream. In rather an open clearing they found a pork-barrel, with two or three pieces of pork still floating in it. The guide told them it must have belonged to some of the last winter's loggers, who, actuated by laziness rather than by charity, would often leave by the wayside a barrel, which contained but a small amount of provender, for the benefit of the next comers. These loggers were generally hired by rich companies who could afford such generosity. "I suppose you will have more men this winter," said the guide, turning to Will, "and not go yourself. You made enough

last winter, didn't you, to stay at home now?"

"I shall wait until the winter comes and then decide," was his reply. "Look! isn't that a hedgehog in the alders?" It was gone before the boys could see it. Long before sunset they had reached the little harbor where their batteau was lying.

"Why did we not take this path, when we went up after the moose, it is so much easier?" said Frank.

"Because," replied the guide, "you run a greater chance of finding the moose by the banks of a stream, than in a more open trail."

They pitched their tent again, and prepared supper, and then sat Turkish fashion, ready for a good long talk, as Frank said. No one spoke, as no one ever can when expected to speak. At last Hal broke the silence, exclaiming, "there's the new moon, it looks like the paring of my nail, when I cut it off."

"Oh! what a disagreeable idea," answered Frank.

"Can you see a man on horseback when the moon is full? I can."

"I likes to look at the stars," said their guide. "They are like my little girl's eyes; she is up there with them. Somehow God sorter tells me more about Himself, out in these old forests, than He does at home. What lots of patience He has; now jes look at this little bit o' earth down here, ain't it kind o' pooty with all them mosses, and jes think what bothersome work to do. Well, well! we live in a funny old world, and there are all sorts of people in it."

The next morning they took their batteau, and as they were paddling down the stream, with the quartered moose wrapt in its hide, lying in the bottom of the canoe, they caught sight of a muskrat, "musquash" the Indians call it, who often bring it within reach by a curious squeaking sound, and then strike it dead. They met a mink also, which in winter is shot for its fur. Afternoon brought them to the spot from which they had taken their batteau, and now shouldering and now hauling

the moose, as they had done before in following down the trail, they took the most direct cut through the woods to the settlement, where Will and the boys, leaving their guide with many thanks and good wishes and a special kiss from Hal, hastened home. Jennie and Maud, Martha and Ben, were awaiting them. Loud were the shouts and long the talking. Every thing was told in one way by Will, in another by Frank, and in still another by Hal. The choicest cornel-berries had been plucked for Maud. Hal had carved out of the white pine, some tiny plates and knives and forks and spoons for Maud's baby house. Martha claimed the trout as her special property, while Jennie and Ben took their reward in the pleasure of once more being a united family.

Maud soon claimed her favorite seat on her brother's knee by the sunset window, and told him all her little troubles. "Maud went upstairs, downstairs, no find Will; Will gone way off in woods. Maud cry; Jennie come, tell me Heavenly Father loves Will,

takes care of him, bring Will home. Maud kneel down by Jennie, and tell heavenly Father be sure take good care of Will. Will won't leave little Maud any more?" Will folded his arms around his darling sister and wondered what he should do when the winter came.

"O Hal!" exclaimed Jennie, "I forgot to give you a letter: it came yesterday. I do hope that it is not to say you must go home."

Hal read it quickly with a lengthening face. "Yes, it is. Mother says she wants me to come at once, so that I can begin school Monday; so I shall have to go to-morrow; isn't it too bad when I am having such a splendid time? Mother says she really needs me, oh dear! I hope she isn't sick: I wish I could go to-night."

"Let me see the letter," said Will. "No, Hal, I do not think she is sick, but she is lonely and misses you; and, as she is very decided that you should begin school Monday, I am afraid we shall have to give you up and help you pack to-night. If we had come

home yesterday, you would have had to-day in which to bid good-by to all your old haunts."

It was late before the buzz of voices ceased. Hal and Frank had so many parting words to utter. They began early the next morning, and not till Hal was fairly in the cars, could Frank be persuaded to leave his side. They all parted from him with regret, for his sweet temper, brightness and frankness, had endeared him to all.

CHAPTER X.

LOGGING.



TWO months had passed since Hal went home, during which time, the daily life of Will's family had varied little. Frank's lessons had been occasionally interrupted by a day's excursion into the woods after trout, bears, or rabbits. Jennie's life would have been very monotonous, if it had not been for her interest in her studies, to which every day she gave two or three hours of hard work. In the evening, she and Will read their German and French together, or she sewed, while Will read some history or novel aloud, and Frank carved rustic brackets and book-racks or flower-pots. It was a very happy, quiet life. The people in the settlement often found their way down to Will's house, "it was so pleasant to sit and chat awhile with city folks," they said.

Old Ben had already been gone for three weeks with another man of more supple frame, exploring Will's lands, climbing up hills and trees to spot the highest pines and find the nearest streams, by which the logs could be driven down. Timber had steadily increased in price during the last five years, and as Will's lands contained some of the best and straightest pines in that section of the country, he had been able to realize large profits. Each winter he had been off with his men as "boss." This year, however, he felt he must intrust most of the business to Ben, who was a thoroughly experienced logger. Frank's eagerness to try winter camp-life was so urgent, that Will at last decided to take him with him for three weeks, leaving Ben, who had returned, in charge of his family; at the end of that time, they would come back to remain till spring, Ben taking Will's place in the camp.

The night before his departure, he knelt down with his sister and brother, and commended them to God's care. Then holding

Jennie on his knee, and drawing Frank to his side, he told them how unspeakably thankful he was to them, for the brave, cheerful manner in which they had endured their privations and helped him and each other, by their mutual love.

"I do love you dearly, Will," said Jennie. "Sister could not love brother more than I love you. If I have been brave, it is because you have taught me; the peace and quietness in my heart comes from God, but you showed me how to find it."

The next morning Will appeared in a red flannel shirt, woollen pants, and a black Kosuth hat. Maud was delighted, until she connected his dress with the idea of his departure. "Will must not leave Maud: Maud cry, feel bad all day long. Please stay, Will?"

"Will come back soon," he replied, "and bring Maud a little squirrel to play with." The child's face brightened, and Will and Frank, taking advantage of the interval of sunshine, started, with quick steps and aching hearts, for the settlement. Jennie's heart was

overflowing ; for a long time now, she must be alone, with no letters to cheer her ; but little Maud's grief was so touching that she forgot her own sorrow in consoling her sister.

Will found his men all ready with their ox-teams and outfit of axes, guns, ammunition, blankets, frying-pan, tea-kettle, shipbread, molasses, salt pork, and beans and flour. After two or three days, they reached their last winter's camp, which was buried deep in the woods and needed repairing before it was again habitable. The crevices between the trunks of the trees, of which the hut was composed, were filled with the dried leaves and turf lying on the floor of the camp, which otherwise must have been removed to a distance, from fear of fire. New fir, spruce, and hemlock boughs were laid on the roof, so that though covered with snow the camp should remain warm and tight. The seat before the fire called the "Deacon's Seat," "made of a spruce or fir, split in halves with three or four stout limbs left on one side for legs," and carved with many a name, bade defiance to

all attacks of weather or time. The camp was about twenty feet long and fifteen wide, built of great logs resting one upon another and notched at the ends; smaller logs were then placed upon them, each of the smaller ones being successively shorter than the other, until the roof was formed. The fire-place, directly under the chimney, was marked by a log fence on the ground, within which was a pile of ashes one or two feet deep. Here the fire was kept up night and day, melting the snow and drying the rain drops. In one corner was the wash-basin and water-pail, to which a pork barrel was now added. The latch was made of wood like an iron one, and needed constant repair. If the camp is near a spring and near the logger's work, he cares for little else. The hovels for the cattle are built in a similar manner, minus the chimney.

"You have not taken any hay for the oxen," said Frank, who was much distressed at the certain prospect, as he feared, of their starvation.

"Some of my men come up in the summer,"

answered Will, "and cut the hay on the river meadows and pile it up in large stacks on scaffolds, or 'staddles' the men call them, and then when the streams are frozen, slip it off the staddles on to ice sleds and haul it down to the camp. In autumn, these meadows are always overflowed, so that if they intend to leave the hay until winter, they must pile it on these staddles to keep it out of the water."

"Who has the hardest time logging?" asked Frank.

"I do," sounded the rough voice of one of the teamsters, who had overheard the question. "When the rest of the men have all turned in, I lights my lantern and looks after the oxen the last thing 'fore going to sleep; it takes all my spare time to mend the tackle, and there is no end to the feeding and carding and yoking 'em, and rubbing 'em to keep 'em warm, but I sort of loves 'em and wants 'em comfortable."

After the winter camp was made secure, Frank's interest was next claimed by the "swamping" of the roads. 'This is done by

“spotting” the trees which are to be felled, and making a path ten to twelve feet wide from the tree to the landing. The underbrush is all cleared away, the trees cut down, the hollows in the ground filled up, with short logs and pole bridges thrown across the brooks, if any occur.

Will assigned to each man his work. He himself was “boss.” Some were choppers, some swampers, others barkers, loaders, teamsters ; one man was cook. By the time these preparations had been made, other teams and extra hands appeared. Frank was impatient to have operations actually begin, and great was his joy, when Will at last announced that a certain tree having been selected, he might go with the men and look on, but absolutely forbade him to offer any assistance, for he was too young and inexperienced. Frank had already done many little kind acts in the camp, and now reaped the benefit of his unselfishness in the willingness of the loggers to explain this, to him, new and strange business.

“Now young chap, look ye here,” said a

chopper, "we're fust a going to cut down them 'ere small trees for bed pieces, to hold the pine when it comes down, else its weight would keep it stuck fast in the snow, and we should have a pretty piece of work to dig it up; and when I call 'clear off,' — be sure you go as fast as your legs can carry you, or there'll be sunthin' to pay, if yer head gets hurt."

At the first stroke of the axe Frank began to retreat, and when the tree fell with a crash that could be heard far off, he was hiding behind another pine equally large. There was something terrific to him in daring to lay prostrate this gigantic tree. As the barkers approached, he drew near and watched them as they stripped the bark from that portion of the trunk which is drawn along on the snow. Then came the "teams" drawing a short sled, called a "bob-sled," which sustains one half the weight of the whole log, the other end resting on the ground. The loaders, by dint of chains, a skid, bars, tackle and fall, haul the log on to the sled, the teamster arranges his oxen and the sled, and then

they settle to it, squeaking, groaning, vociferating, till they reach the landing. Frank accompanied them a little way, and then returned to watch the same process on other trees.

One day's life, he found, was very similar to another with the exception of Sunday, when the loggers washed and mended their clothes, greased their boots, strewed fresh boughs on their beds and searched for spruce gum. One of the men proudly asserted that he never bothered himself about his clothes; he had one flannel shirt to start with, and as it grew colder he put on another, and when colder still, he put on a third, and that was the end on't. Some of the men wrote letters home, fewer still read their Bible. In the evening, Will insisted upon the attendance of all the men at prayers (a habit, rarely, if ever, observed in other camps); and Frank soon saw that here, as in the settlement, his brother's personal influence was of great weight, making the men better, by force of his own life, rather than by direct teaching, though no

one knew so well as he how to say the right word to the right man, at the fitting moment.

On week-day evenings the men told "yarns" and sang songs, while the cook mixed up the bread for the next day's baking, and the teamster mended his "traps."

At the end of three weeks, Will and Frank returned home, leaving one of the men as temporary "boss," until Ben could arrive. Jennie and Maud were overjoyed at seeing them. Each had much to question and answer.

"I was so lonesome," said Jennie, "that I have been over to the settlement very often. Sundays I was there all day; I told them I knew you would want them to go to meeting, just the same as if you were here. Most of them came, and Mr. Norwood read in the Bible, and then we sang, oh, ever so many hymns, one after another, and, Will, was it wrong in me? they asked me if I would not pray. Just as I was going to say no, I thought that if I really loved God I ought

to forget all about myself, so I did repeat the Lord's prayer, and they said it with me."

"God bless you, my dear sister," was Will's only answer.

"After the service was over, Maud and I would go over to Aunt Nancy's and stay there to dinner. And, oh, she wore such horrid-looking caps! they were no better than night-caps; so I made her one out of some old lace I had; you don't know how nice she looks in it, not at all as if she were going to die, and she was so proud of it and showed it to all the other old women, and then of course I had to offer to make one for each of them. To-morrow, I promised to go over and show them how to make hoods like those quilted ones which mother wore, with a close cape, to protect the back of the neck. It will be like a sewing-circle; we are going to meet in Mrs. Ober's parlor."

"I thought she never opened the room except once a week," said Will; "her best, literally her Sunday go-to-meeting carpet, will be covered with shreds."

“ Yes,” said Jennie, “it is a good joke, but I could not make both hoods and caps for every one, so I thought the shortest way would be to teach them. It is so pleasant to be with people again, though some of them are so queer. I see somebody every day or two. They took pity on me when you were away.”

“ You will have your hands full of work. First milinery, and then dress-making, and by and by school-teaching: what do you think of that ? ”

CHAPTER XL

FRANK'S SCHOOL



THE lessons progressed more vigorously than ever. Both Jennie and Frank evidently lost nothing by their non-attendance at school, and both thought that they learnt more from their brother's instruction than from their former teachers. Ben had gone up into the woods, and Martha spent all her leisure time in altering her dresses into the city fashion.

"I have a new idea," stated Frank one morning at breakfast. "Here at home I have nothing to do in the afternoons, and those children in the settlement have nothing to do, so my idea is to open a school."

"Bravo for you," said Will. "I approve of it with all my heart."

"Jennie teaches millinery to-day, so I'll

drag her over on the sled and see what I can do. Oh dear, I wish I had some primers! but I can manage without them."

After dinner, Jennie, wrapped in a thick cloak and shawl, and with a close-fitting warm hood on her head, seated herself on the sled, which Frank could easily draw over the hard even snow. While Jennie went in to Mrs. Ober's house, Frank talked to a group of children who were playing in the snow.

"Can any of you read?" he asked.

No one spoke.

"Can any of you spell d-o-g, dog; c-a-t, cat?"

"Some of us know'd how; most of us 'haint never been to school," said one of them.

"Don't you want to learn?" asked Frank.

"No, we don't," said another.

Poor Frank! it was not very encouraging for him; he stood still a few minutes, wondering what he should next do or say. A bright thought occurred to him, and he took

up some snow and began modelling it. The boys and girls watched him at a distance, by degrees edging up to his side.

"What is that?" he asked, holding out in his hand an enormous letter A.

"A; that ain't much," answered Jim; "any one could do it."

"Try, and see if you can," said Frank.

Jim tried and failed; the others laughed, and he retorted, "Why don't you try yourselves, if you think it is so plaguy easy?"

Whereupon they all began to emulate each other. Those who knew how to read soon made respectable letters, and assisted the younger ones who had never seen the letter A.

"Now let us make B," said Frank, when they all had made an A. "We'll each try twice, and those who can make it best shall teach the others, and then we'll make C, and so on through the alphabet. They all worked away busily for more than an hour, until their fingers were stiff. The ground presented a comical appearance with great A's, little A's,

nouncing B's strewn over it in hard cakes of snow.

"Will you come again to-morrow and play more letters?" begged the children.

"Yes," replied Frank; "but we must divide into two classes, and it is too cold to play out in the snow. Won't some little girl's mother let us play in her kitchen? I'll ask Susie Lee's mother. Don't you think she would be willing?" added he, turning to Susie.

"Mother would be willing," answered the little girl, "but then we can't make snow letters; the fire would melt them."

"No, of course we can't," said Frank; "but we can do better than that. All of you must bring some birch bark; the girls their scissors, and the boys their jack-knives, and we can cut out the letters."

"I wish it were to-morrow now," sighed they all.

Frank went home, quite cheered by his success. The next afternoon he trudged over to Mrs. Lee's house, and though it was a bitter

cold day, he found all the children assembled.

"You are Will's own brother," was Mrs. Lee's salutation. "He's allers a doing for us grown folk, and now you've taken a shine to the children. I guess your mother was a mighty good woman."

"Indeed she was, ma'am," answered Frank, trying to command his voice. "Come now," he called to the children more cheerfully; "let us form the classes. There are seventeen of you in all; and eight of you can read as well as I can. You must be the first class, and help me with the others; and when we have all cut letters for an hour (the big scholars will like to do it for the fun of it), the first class shall take turns in reading aloud from 'Parent's Assistant,' which I brought over with me, while I still teach the little ones their letters. Now, see, here is a big A. I cut it out at home. Who can make one like it?"

They all tried with varying success; the older boys and girls elaborated theirs, but Frank's patience was sorely tried by the

clumsy manner in which the younger portion handled their knives and scissors. Each one was in earnest, however; and as they already had made intimate acquaintance with A and B, they soon ventured further on in knowledge.

“Now, here are four letters all cut out in bark. I shall tell you the name of each one, and when you know them all by heart, then you can cut them out. This lesson is only for the little ones; the first class can have a recess.”

His words made them all laugh; the older boys and girls disdained the idea of being tired, and watched and assisted in the progress of the others. When the younger children were thoroughly accustomed to these four letters, Frank told them that they might try to cut them out, while the first class would read, who, as he found to his surprise, needed much drilling; but he had so well arranged his method that he could easily attend to both divisions of labor.

“School is done,” said he, at the end of two

hours. "Clear up all your things, and one of you go and get a broom, and we'll take turns in sweeping the room."

"Ef that don't beat all," said Mrs. Lee, as, entering soon after, she found it swept and clean. "He's a bright one. Who'd have thought of a boy doing a gal's work? and 'tain't many gals nuther, who'd have done it ef they'd knowed how."

"I wonder," said Frank at supper-time to Jennie, "how long it will take those young ones to go through the alphabet. They cannot learn more than two or three letters a day, as they must review the old ones; and three into twenty-six goes eight times and two-thirds, so they will be nine days learning."

"Oh! they will practise at home," said Will; "and their mothers will be glad to have them, as it will keep them out of mischief. What else shall you contrive to do with birch bark? papering and teaching the alphabet you have shown can be done through its means."

"They are both such original ideas that I shall be contented with them," replied Frank.

Every day Frank went over to the settlement through all the snow and rain storms, going directly after dinner, and coming home before it was dark. Sometimes Jennie and Will came over to tea, and then they all went home together in the cold bright moonlight. The invitations had to be returned, and Mr. and Mrs. Ober, and Mr. and Mrs. Lee, or some other good kind people, would come to Will's house to tea. Once Frank gave a party to all his school, only they came to dinner instead of to tea, because they were such little folks. Jennie cut paper dolls for the girls, and they all played "hunt the slipper," and "blind man's buff," and had a splendid time.

As Will had predicted, from millinery Jennie proceeded to dress-making. When every woman had a hood, every woman felt she must either have a new dress, or alter an old one. The semi-weekly coach had brought

several bundles from Bangor, much to the surprise of its driver, who little guessed the influence that was at work in this wild, uncultivated region of Maine. Jennie liked nothing better than to be of service to others, especially if her ambition was roused. Her delicate regard for others prevented her from wounding the feelings of any one, while her gentle hints were followed as effectually, as if they had been commands.

By the end of the winter, Frank's younger pupils not only knew their letters, but could spell all the words that they knew. He had taught them to put letters together, by taking a newspaper and pointing out the simple words, such as "the, in, man, boy," &c. As each child's paper was different, this system involved a great deal of repetition and reaching forward, for they all sat on the floor and handed the papers from one to another. Will had given them each a pencil, and when Frank called out "m" they would dot it with a little black mark. He would next call "a"

and "n;" they would dot those letters. Now find me the word m-a-n, man, in the first or second column of the paper, and in such a paragraph, first, second, or third line, which ever it might be. He knew previously in what column it could be found, so you see how much work he had to do at home in preparing his lessons for them. Very often they would pick out words, out of school-hours, and triumphantly show them to him when he came.


His reading-class would have graced any public school. They all knew how to pronounce words, when he first took them under his care, but he had taught them to read with expression and distinctness. "Parent's Assistant" had been lent from one child to another, till Frank hardly recognized his own book in the crumpled, dog-eared volume which came back to him at the end of the winter.

Besides merely teaching them to read, he had the opportunity to correct many little bad habits: such as having dirty hands and

disordered hair. What he said was spoken in such a pleasant way that the boys forgot they were performing a duty, and thought it was another way of having fun.

CHAPTER XII.

RIVER-DRIVING.

“AUD tired; Will, please tell Maud a story?” and she climbed into her brother’s lap and rested her heated little head against his shoulder. “What makes Maud tired? Heavenly Father love Maud, and make her tired, too, Maud don’t like it.”

“God knows what is best for Maud,” answered Will.

“No, no; Maud don’t like it.”

“Yes, darling; I know Maud doesn’t like to be tired, but when Maud is a good little girl, and minds Will when she does not want to, it is because she knows Will loves her, and only wants her to mind, because he knows best; and by and by, Maud thinks brother Will knew all about it, and Maud is glad she minded him.”

"And heavenly Father know best too, and Maud don't care if me is tired."

"Then," answered Will, "Maud will be happy all day long, when she is tired, and when she isn't tired." His heart was heavier than it had been since his mother's death, when Jennie came to bear away the sleeping child.

Had the severe winter been too much for her? How could he leave her? Yet Ben would be home to-morrow, and he must go up to the camp. There was no help for it. He was needlessly anxious. So he bestirred himself in preparations for his journey, and soon forgot his fears.

The next day they all went over to the settlement to meet Ben with the teamsters. When the winter's work in hauling logs is completed, the teams are sent home; and as they approach the villages, the men ornament their oxen with strips of red flannel, and drive upright poles into their sleds, from the top of which floats the same flaming color, the procession resembling somewhat the caravan of

a menagerie. Each teamster is anxious to produce his oxen in the best condition possible, as the appearance of these animals is the test of his ability. •

- After the usual greetings and inquiries had been exchanged, Will and Frank hastened on their road, for Frank had again persuaded Will that he must accompany him. It was early April when they reached the camp, amidst loud cheers of welcome from the loggers. The sun had already begun to melt the snows on the mountain, covering the lowlands with water, and making respectable-sized brooks.

The morning after their arrival, Will directed the men in cutting away the bushes near the landing, and in breaking the ice to form a channel of sufficient width to allow three or four logs to float abreast.

“Oh! what queer marks! what do they mean?” asked Frank.

“Them tells who owns the logs,” answered one of the men; “for when the logs gets all jammed, our’s and somebody’s else, and

another man's, all in the same stream, we couldn't tell which is which, if it weren't for these marks."

"I shouldn't like river-driving," said Frank; "I don't want to be in water up to my waist."

"No one likes it," replied the same logger, who had spoken before; "we gets half frozen, and have to rub each other down like horses to get warm again. It is mighty hard work, rolling these 'ere logs into the brook. Hand-spikes, and skids, and pries are good things; but they ain't worth much, unless a man has got a tough back, and lots of muscle to work 'em. It is thawing so fast this season that we can make quick work of it. Hush! there's the ice a-cracking. Don't you hear? what a crash!" And to Frank's great astonishment, down, up, sideways, in every direction, the ice was breaking, the earth loosening; then came a tremendous peal heard a mile off. It came from the logs, which suddenly perceived that a way was made for them, and down they rushed pell-mell under and over and through the cakes of ice still

obstructing their path. The loggers swung their caps and gave three cheers.

"What are you going to do next?" asked Frank

"Go with 'em down to Bangor, and perhaps be killed, and perhaps not."

"I wish you would not laugh at me, but tell me really and truly what you are going to do," said Frank, peevishly.

"I'm not laughing at you; 'tain't no laughing matter. I'll tell you. You see these 'ere logs? Well; they floats along all right now, and we shall go down by the bank, following 'em. By and by they'll get into a swamp and play 'hide and seek' among the bushes, and we shall have to get on 'em and ride 'em standing till they behave 'emselves. Next, they comes to a place where there is a fall, and over they go and get all jammed and bruised together, and piled on top of each other; so we have to jump from one to another and separate 'em with a hand-spike or an axe. Why, bless your heart," said he, seeing Frank's astonished face, "last April the

logs got stuck fast just above a fall and made the worst jam I ever did see; there was no way of getting at 'em except over the bluff; so they tied a rope round me, and let me down easy, but I couldn't start 'em no way at all; so I untied the rope and let it hang loose, and goes out on the logs where the jam was thickest, and strikes quick with my axe, one, two, three times; the log snapped, and I had just time to catch the rope 'fore the whole jam moved; they jerked me up so quick that my leg was all cut and bruised against the sharp rocks; but then that was pleasanter than being killed amongst the logs."

Frank drew a long breath. "I am glad you were not killed. Where do you sleep at night?"

"Where we can," he answered; "just about where the logs are when night comes. Just shake down some boughs and pull a blanket over us; we are lucky if it don't rain all the time. The next day the cook goes ahead, and gets our meals ready against we come along. Driving isn't always as hard.

When we come to a lake we get all the timber inside a boom-fence of logs, and float it along together with sails and oars."

"Where do you stop? Down by the ocean?"

"Bless ye now, different men stops at different places; but most of us here on the Penobscot stops between the islands near Oldtown, where the logs all go right into the boom. Then our work is done, and we go home, and ain't sorry to go neither."

"What is the boom?" asked Frank.

"A lot of logs fastened end to end, which makes a kind of fence to hold the loose logs, and keep 'em from floating down the river."

"I don't understand what becomes of the logs," persisted Frank.

"You are a particular young un," was the reply. "Why, after they gets sorted, some goes to the mills to be sawed, and then—why, some of our men like to stay and take rafts of boards farther down the river, where the tide comes in, and where they put 'em on

board vessels, and that's the last they ever see of 'em."

"I am sure I am very much obliged to you for telling me so much," said Frank.

"You are welcome. You better go up to the camp, for your brother will be for starting off home."

So they parted company, perhaps never to meet again. Will and Frank turned their faces homeward, to Frank's regret, who had decided that he would rather be a lumberman than a doctor. Will had usually accompanied the drivers, but he now felt that he must not incur any risk of life, or stay longer away from home, while others were dependent upon him.

"You must go down to the boom, mustn't you?" said Frank.

"You seem very anxious on the subject," replied Will. "You do not care to go yourself?"

"Of course not," answered Frank, making up a wry face.

"You have proved yourself such a careful

logger that I ought to take you," said Will. "Yes: I shall go to the mill in a week's time to collect my own logs, and give directions about sawing them or sending them off. Perhaps you had better go, as you may never have another opportunity."

"Can't I come up to the camp next winter?"

"If we are still living in the woods, you can. My timber has turned out better even than I expected; so who knows but what we may be rich?"

"I used to think it would be jolly to be rich, when I was a little boy, because then I could buy cream-cakes and pickled limes for luncheon, and not have to get spruce-gum all the time. Slate-pencil dust is pretty good. But now, I rather be a logger: it is more fun."

"You only care for things in proportion to their fun?"

"No, I don't. I like to study; but that's fun, too. I don't know why, Will, but I like to do every thing, — to play, and hang

paper, and teach school, and go logging. But don't you wish Maud were with us? she is fun, now; only she can't play half as roughly as she used to. She gets all tired out, just as you are beginning to have a good time. I wouldn't be a girl for all the world."

These words of Frank's renewed all Will's forebodings about his little sister. He was therefore greatly delighted, on returning home, to find her stronger and better than when he left. After two or three days, he and Frank started off again down to the mill, which the logs had reached, without causing any broken bones or loss of life to their drivers, as was frequently the case.

The various operations of sorting and sawing the logs, and sending off rafts of boards, were performed exactly as the logger had described. Frank witnessed it all, and told Will, when they were at home again, that he thought he could write a book about logging and river-driving.

"You can write a composition about it for me," said Will.


“ Oh! that would be worse than all the grammar lessons. No: I don't want to describe it. I can remember it well enough.”

“ As you please,” said his brother. “ In either case, I think you will recollect what you have seen and learnt; for you have been very desirous to understand every thing you saw.”

“ That old logger said I beat the Dutch for asking questions.”

CHAPTER XIII.

MAUD.

“OESN'T Maud ever eat any more breakfast?” inquired Will, one morning after his return.

“She has eaten a large breakfast for her,” replied Jennie.

“O Maud!” called Frank, “come and see this strange dog and the kitty eating together. Isn't the kitty polite to let him have the bones off her plate?”

“Little kitty afraid of big bow-wow,” said Mand. “Me don't want to see kitty eat; me sleepy.”

“Why, pet, you have just got up,” said Jennie.

“Maud been up great big long time. Maud sleepy. Jennie tell me story about the mousie sleepy, and Maud sleepy.”

"Jump up in my lap then," was her reply. "Once upon a time, there were two little mice, and mamma mouse said they had been such good little mice all day, that they might have a party that evening. So they asked their little cousins, who lived in the next hole, to take tea with them. When the cousins had sharpened their teeth on a piece of brick, — for mice never brush their teeth, only sharpen them, so that they can gnaw through wood, — they went into their aunt's hole.

"‘We are very hungry,’ said they: ‘where is supper? We put on our kid slippers, so no one shall hear us.’

"‘You are very impolite and dishonest,’ said their cousins; ‘but as we are also hungry, we won’t say any thing more about it, but scamper as fast as we can.’

"Pretty soon they came out into a big pantry, and climbed up to the top shelf, and nibbled on some cheese and a jar of raspberry preserve.

"‘Oh, how nice!’ exclaimed the cousins: ‘it tastes a great deal better than what we can

find in our pantry. Mrs. Steele is so stingy.'

"The little mice ate till they couldn't eat any more, and then went slowly home. The cousins said good-night, and ran off to their hole. Mamma mouse put her little ones to bed, just as Jennie is doing. Mamma mouse sat down on her tail, and took the baby mouse on her knees, and rocked her to sleep. Rock-a-bye baby; mousie is asleep, Maud is sleepy, sound asleep."

She laid her sister down, and went back to Will, saying, "If mother were here, she would tell me what to do. Maud eats nothing, and is too tired to walk, and has a little, dry, hard cough. I have done every thing I could think of, but she is no better. Oh! what shall we do, if — Can't we find a doctor?"

"There is no physician nearer than fifty miles," he answered. "Maud is too weak to be taken to him, and perhaps he would not come to us."

"Yes: he would, if you should tell him how

lonely we are, and how sick Maud is. She'll sleep about half an hour, and then wake up hot and exhausted. In the middle of the day she seems quite bright, but by four o'clock is as tired as she is now."

"All I can do, is to go myself and see him," said Will. "I can go down on the train to-morrow, and perhaps he will come back with me. The winter has been too severe for her; but she will be better as soon as the settled warm weather comes."

"It was the settled warm weather that killed mother," answered Jennie.

Will rose quickly, with an expression of pain in his face. "If I go at once, I can be back by to-morrow. Good-by;" and he hurried out of the house, not stopping to kiss Jennie, who understood the torrent of feeling in his heart that her words had created. He returned the next day, bringing a kindly-looking man with him.

"Doctor Magoun can hardly believe that we live down here in the woods. He says he knew father well, and that his children are

just like him, in doing such a foolish thing as living in a log cabin."

"But we could not do any thing else, sir," said Jennie, respectfully. "Will's business was here, and he could not support us if he left it; and we were too young to be left alone, and we had no relations to take care of us; and if we had had a hundred, I rather take care of myself."

"Umph! the old spirit. You are smart, are you? Your brother says you know how to do every thing."

"Did he really say so?" asked Jennie, her color rising at the thought of her brother's praise. "If you will sit down to supper, sir, you can judge for yourself about my cooking. Martha and I do the work together. This is Maud," added she, bringing forward her sister.

"Come and look at my watch: blow it open, if you can," said the doctor, gently lifting the child on his knee.

"But supper is ready, sir. You can't drink your tea and hold her?"

"Oh, yes! he can," exclaimed Maud.

"I can try," said the doctor, laughing, whose heart had already been won by the sweet face of the little one. It was a merry supper-table. The doctor declared that he had never eaten such delicious bread and cake, and told Jennie that she could make her fortune if she would move to his village and open a bake-shop. Maud was very happy, and thought it would be very funny to have sister Jennie a pastry-cook. She could have as many gingerbread dolls then as she wanted.

The doctor slept in Will's room that night; and the next day, to their astonishment, told them he was going to "look round" and amuse himself, and should not go home till to-morrow. Maud was with him as far as her strength would allow, seeming to feel safe under his guidance, and finally telling him that she loved him 'most as much as she did brother Will.

"Will you not tell us, sir, what you think about Maud?" said Will, when the children had gone to bed.

"You know well enough what I think," was the evasive reply. "Medicine is of no use: all you can do is to try and build up her strength by nourishing food, if she'll take it; but she is too young to be forced to eat. Make her happy and comfortable as far as you can."

"Did I do wrong to bring her here?" asked Will.

"You said you could not help it; that she must come with the rest. It has not made much difference. A year or two, perhaps; that is all. It must have come sooner or later; and it is a hundred times better that you should have been all together, even if it may have been a little hastened."

Little more was said, excepting a few special instructions which Dr. Magoun bade Jennie observe. The next morning he left them with a choking voice and wet eyes, much to his own amazement, accompanied by expressions of heartfelt gratitude from Jennie and Will.

May and June had passed. Maud's color

was brighter, and her hair more golden. Frank told her she was as pretty as an angel.

“Maud want to be an angel,” she answered, scarcely knowing what she meant, except that if she were an angel, she would not cough, and would be with mamma.

At times, they felt she was growing well, she seemed so bright; but afterwards she would sink into greater feebleness, and care less and less for her plays. To one doll she remained faithful,—an old London, wooden doll, with which her mother had played in her childhood, and which had descended to Jennie, and then to Maud, who felt there was some peculiar virtue contained in its frame by right of inheritance. Lala Little, that was the doll’s name, always slept with her at night and during her frequent day-naps, but was left in the baby-house the rest of the time.

“O Frankie!” said she one evening, when they had placed her so that she could see the sunset; “look! see Maud’s fingers! Maud

can see the bright light right through them ;” and she turned her hand round and round, as if it were made of prisms to reflect the bright colors. “ Please, Jennie, take off Maud’s little shoe ; so hot.”

“ Poor little foot !” said Frank, stroking it caressingly.

“ Frank tickles me,” she said. “ Poor Maud’s little foot small ; put on shoe ; cold, cold. What makes me thin ? Bessie fat, Maud thin.”

“ Because God makes Bessie fat and Maud thin,” said her brother ; “ but God loves Maud dearly, and by-and-by he will make her very happy.”

“ God make Maud happy now. Maud don’t want to wait. Where is God ? Tell Maud, please.”

“ Maud must wait a little longer, and then she shall see God, and perhaps mamma too ; but Maud must remember all the time that God loves her more than brother Will or sister Jennie does, or Frankie.”

“ Me know that, because God made Frank

and Jennie for Maud, and gave her most every thing she has. Will give her play-things, God give her hands and eyes, so Maud play with her dolls, and make tea-party for them."

Will had made a little couch for her, out of pine trunks, which was strewed with fresh cedar every morning, and then covered with soft blankets and a cool linen sheet. On this they drew her from window to window, and sometimes out into the green grass. At night Jennie sang to her and bathed her limbs, watching over her, week after week, sometimes snatching but little repose herself; or Will would take her place, and she would throw herself on the floor, sleeping for hours there. Frank had given up his school to be with Maud. He never left her except in search of wild-flowers, or cones or bark, which he wrought into frames, vases, rings, plates, any thing which Maud would suggest. She would lie watching him for hours, seldom sleeping in the daytime, now and then talking, but liking best to have him tell her sto-

ries, or bring her kitten into her room, or a pet rabbit, and a squirrel which he had tamed for her. She would follow their movements with her eyes till wearied, when Frank would smooth her hair, while he and Jennie sang.

Old Ben moved about with a noiseless tread, and was never more pleased than when he could bring a faint smile upon her countenance by some of his comical stories; but as soon as he saw any look of pain he stopped, and went off hurriedly to bury his face in his hands, and give himself up to dim thoughts of things which had never before entered his mind. Martha's voice grew low and tender when speaking to Maud; and she took greater pains with her toilette, for she seemed to feel that Maud was on holy ground, to which carelessness in dress or manner was ill-suited. The children often came from the settlement, bringing berries strung on a straw, which they hoped would tempt her to eat them. She enjoyed seeing and hearing them, but wished they would not go away crying whenever

they came, little knowing that it was her own pale face and bright, sunken eyes which awed them with a new grief.

One Wednesday, after they had been with her as usual, she asked Will to tell her more about heavenly Father and all the beautiful things he had made, and to tell her about Jesus. "Maud love Jesus because he was so good. God loved him so much," she said. When her brother had ended, she begged Jennie to sing to her, and held out one hand to her sister, while Frank took the other, her head resting against Will, who knelt on the floor, that he could better support her on her low couch. "Sing more, Jennie, sing all the time; Maud hear another music, too; Maud love you all, she don't know which she love best. Maud wants to see God most, He'll take away the pain. Don't cry; please, don't cry. Sing, Jennie, sing;" her little voice grew weaker, but her eyes were as radiant as ever. Her sister sang till she thought Maud was asleep. Still holding her hand, she rested in silence by her side. Many minutes had not

gone before Will whispered, "The pain has gone, she is singing too."


There was no burst of grief: the beauty of death had fallen upon their hearts. Here, alone in the forest, with God's sky above, and his earth below, the little family had placed their dwelling, that they might not be separated; and now God had taken home the youngest and the dearest of their number, had taken the education of her young soul from Jennie's care into his own watchfulness.

The people in the settlement quickly heard that little Maud had gone home. They came over to Will's to offer their sympathy and services. Both were gratefully accepted. Two days glided slowly by, and then, at the same sunset hour as that in which she had left them, they bore her forth into an oak grove near the house, in a rude casket, the work of Ben's loving hands. Will's broken voice rose in such a childlike prayer as Maud's own lips would have framed: the people, guided by Jennie's clear, steadfast

tones, sang one of Maud's favorite hymns; and then the casket was lowered into the ground. Above it waved the green branches, and soft moss and running vines grew over it.

CHAPTER XIV.

GOING.

HE autumn was passing by bringing, with each week and day that elapsed, increasing dread at the prospect of another winter in the clearing; for when Will was gone, Frank and Jennie would be left alone. The joy of their life was changed into quietness, and this very quietness made them feel the more their seclusion. Frank wandered restlessly about: he had no one to run with him to feed the cows, or to count, with even more glee than himself, the new-laid eggs. Jennie said she had nothing to do, — no little dresses to make for Maud, no little sister to amuse or caress; and what should she do when the winter came?

“How would you like to move to Bangor?” said Will, one evening.

"I don't know," replied Jennie, slowly. "I love this place; but how can I endure another cold season, when you are away? I should not know any one in Bangor, but then Frank and I could go to school."

"Oh! that would be first-rate," exclaimed Frank; "because you know, Will, if you ever do get rich, I must go to college. Will you really go to Bangor and send me to college?"

"Yes: if you want to go. I have been thinking a great deal about it, and if you both will make up my mind for me, I should be very glad."

"Where should we live, if we went?" asked Jennie.

"As far as I have any plan, it would be to stay here till I am obliged to go into the woods, logging, and then, to find a boarding-place for you and Frank in Bangor, and in the summer" —

"Come back here," cried they both. "This must always be our summer home."

"Yes," said Will; "while little Maud lies here, I never want to wholly leave it."

"We shall be as 'set up,'" said Frank, "as those funny Denhams in Boston, who have a country house and a city house. It will be jolly to go to school again and know the boys. I do hope they will like me."

"I do not think that they will ever have occasion to feel towards you as some of your old schoolmates did."

"Oh, Will! I never can think of my foolish pride, without being so ashamed and hot. Thinking of Maud will always keep me right. But do you suppose you can get any rooms? Won't they all be engaged?"

Jennie and Will smiled at Frank's impetuosity, and Will said, "Supposing they are all engaged?"

"Why, what do you mean?" asked Jennie: "are you in earnest? Oh, dear! don't be so slow: do tell us."

"I thought you were laughing at Frank just now," answered Will. "I will tell you all I have done. I wrote to a lady whom I know very well, who has a daughter two or three years older than you, Jennie, and a son

just Frank's age. I had a letter from her to-night, in which she said that, if I thought we could all be happy in her house, she would like to have us pass next winter with her, and, when I am away, that she would take good care of you and Frank."

"I don't want to be taken care of," indignantly replied Frank. "I'd rather stay here. You forget how old I am. Perhaps I would let her brush my hair, if she wanted to very much, provided she won't make me run on errands; for if that is what she calls taking care of me, I don't thank her."

"I hope her daughter will be pleasant," said Jennie.

"Oh, you can't help liking her! She is almost as good and pleasant as you are," was her brother's answer.

"Then of course I shall like her. But what will Martha and Ben do?"

"You are not so good a Yankee as I thought you were, if you can't guess."

"I know what you mean. I did half guess it. Martha is going to be married, and she

will live with old Ben, and keep house for him just as she does now; because Jim is in the logging business, and will be gone in the winters, and Ben will take care of the farm and the cattle; and in May or June we shall come back, and Hal will make us a good long visit; oh, it will be so nice! what a dear good brother you are!" and she flung her arms around Will, and then seizing hold of Frank's hands, swung him round and round till both fell on the floor laughing.

"Think of the packing," said Will, trying to look sober.

"Oh! that is nothing," answered Jennie. "I shall leave all my old dresses for Martha."

"As a wedding gift?" suggested Will.

"Oh! she'll take care to have prettier than I ever should have" —

"When you are married: is that what you mean?" asked Frank.

"I don't care what I mean. It will be so splendid to live in a city again, and go to school."

"Splendid! what a regular girl's word,"

said Frank. "Why don't you say 'bunkum' or 'jolly'? I won't quarrel with you: you are only a girl, though you are my sister. Shall I have to be examined before I enter?"

"I will write again and inquire specially about the school," said Will. "I rather think the first snow-storm will find us dwelling in our new rooms."

"All but Maud," said Frank.

This was the only sad thought which they bore with them into their new abode, which was soon brightened by Martha's presence, who went down to the city to have her wedding dress made, and to be married in a "real live church."







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